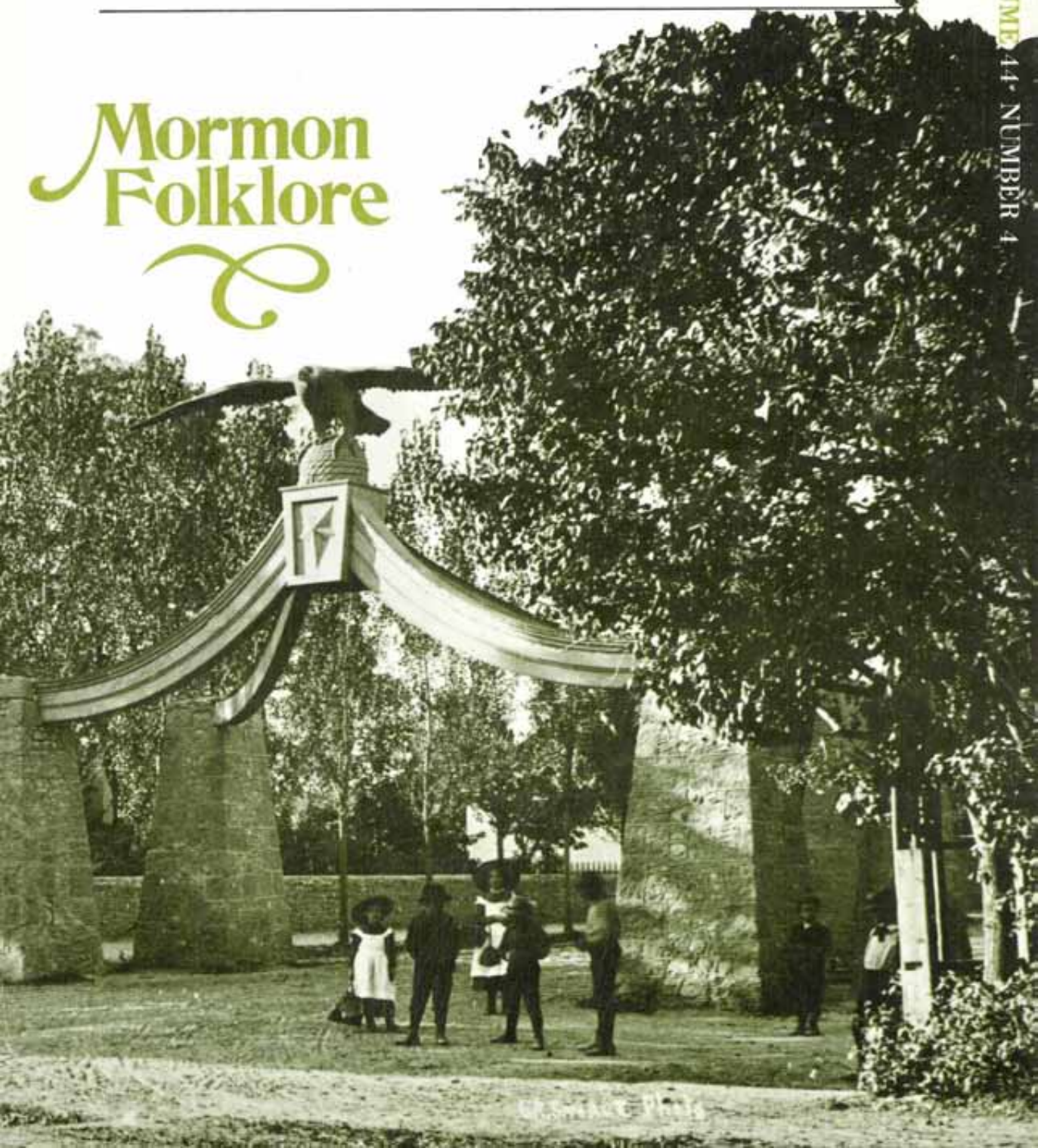

UTAH

HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Mormon
Folklore
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UTAH HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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Folklorists Wayland Hand, Hector Lee, and Austin E. Fife in 1946.

The Study of Mormon Folklore

BY WILLIAM A. WILSON
GUEST EDITOR

IN 1892 THE REVEREND David Utter of Salt Lake City sent to the Chicago Folk-Lore Society a brief description of the Mormon legend of the Three Nephites, including an account of a purported meeting between Brigham Young and one of these Nephite apostles.¹ The society printed

Dr. Wilson is associate professor of English at Brigham Young University and a past president of the Folklore Society of Utah.

¹ David Utter, "Mormon Superstitions," *The Folk-Lorist* 1 (1892-93): 76. For information on the development of folklore study in Utah, see "A Bibliography of the Archives of the Utah Humanities Research Foundation, 1944-1947," *Bulletin*, University of Utah 38 (December 1947), no. 9; Thomas E. Cheney, "The Folklore Society of Utah," *Journal of American Folklore* 82 (1969): 32-33; Austin E. Fife, foreword to *A Guide for Collectors of Folklore in Utah*, by Jan H. Brunvand (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), pp. ix-xi; Austin E. Fife, foreword to *Lore of Faith and Folly*, ed. Thomas E. Cheney (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), pp. i-iv; William A. Wilson, "On Our Down-Again Up-Again Society," *Newsletter of the Folklore Society of Utah* 7 (June 1970): 3-5; William A. Wilson, "Independence or Dependence: The Fate of Our Folklore Society," *Newsletter of the Folklore Society of Utah* 8 (April 1971): 4-7. In addition to consulting these sources, I have interviewed Thomas E. Cheney, Austin E. and Alta S. Fife, Harold F. Folland, and Hector Lee.

Utter's sketch in its journal. To my knowledge, this was the first reference in a scholarly publication to the folklore of the Mormons. And for decades to come it was to remain the only reference. Not until 1938 when Wayland D. Hand published an article in *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, once more about the Three Nephites, was Mormon lore again brought to the attention of folklorists.²

Though he was later to be instrumental in promoting the study of his native Utah culture, Hand, who had just taken a position in the German Department at UCLA, did not at this time continue his study of Mormon folklore. But by now others were ready to pick up the reins. Throughout America the Great Depression had caused people to look to their cultural roots for renewed strength and determination. In our own state the WPA organized the Utah Writers' Project, under the direction of Dale Morgan, which among other things sponsored the collection of local traditions. The songs, tales, and anecdotes collected by project workers were preserved by the Utah State Historical Society and by the Library of Congress. At the same time, the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, under the leadership of Kate B. Carter, began gathering local history and pioneer reminiscences, publishing the results in *Heart Throbs of the West* (1939-51) and *Treasures of Pioneer History* (1952-57).

More important for the future of Mormon folklore studies, however, was the fact that during the 1930s three young Mormon scholars—Thomas E. Cheney, Austin E. Fife, and Hector Lee—began to devote attention to Mormon folklore. Two of them studied under inspiring ballad and folktale teachers—Cheney under George Morey Miller at the University of Idaho and Fife under Aurelio Espinosa, Sr., at Stanford—and determined as a result to apply the methodology of folklore research to their own cultural traditions. The third, Hector Lee, came to Mormon folklore study by a different road. When his widowed mother married a Mormon farmer and moved with her young son from Texas to Millard County, Utah, he, as an outsider, had to learn Mormon customs and beliefs in order to survive. The result was an abiding folklore interest that became more sophisticated as Lee gained more education. By the end of the decade, all three of these young men had begun collecting folklore (Austin Fife was aided in these endeavors by his wife, Alta) and had started down the road that would lead eventually to the most significant publications in Mormon folklore to date: Hector Lee's *The*

² Wayland D. Hand, "The Three Nephites in Popular Tradition," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 2 (1938): 123-239.

Three Nephites: The Substance and Significance of the Legend in Folklore (1949), Austin and Alta Fife's *Saints of Sage and Saddle: Folklore among the Mormons* (1956), and Thomas Cheney's *Mormon Songs from the Rocky Mountains: A Compilation of Mormon Folksong* (1968) and *The Golden Legacy: A Folk History of J. Golden Kimball* (1974).

In the first years of their folklore study, at least, these early workers in the field of Mormon folklore were really amateurs, or hobbyists, whose principal academic commitments lay elsewhere and who pursued their folklore interests in their leisure time, without benefit of institutional support. The first efforts to create such support began in the mid-1940s at the University of Utah. In the midst of the activity was Hector Lee.

In 1944, with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to study the culture of western America, Lee enrolled in the newly founded American Civilization graduate program at the University of New Mexico and began the field work which would result in his dissertation on the Three Nephites. Returning to the University of Utah for the 1945–46 academic year, he was instrumental, through another grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, in establishing at the university the Utah Humanities Research Foundation, of which he became the first director. The three main goals of the foundation were to collect, to preserve, and to interpret significant cultural data from the Intermountain region. To achieve the first two of these goals—the collection and preservation of data—the foundation established an archive and granted fellowships to field collectors and scholars, among them such notable students of Utah culture as William Mulder, Helen Z. Papanikolas, Austin E. Fife and Alta Fife, Don D. Walker, and Lester A. Hubbard. (The grant to Hubbard helped defray expenses for the 1947 collecting trip that brought in many of the songs in his important *Ballads and Songs from Utah* [1961]). To help achieve its third goal—the interpretation of cultural data—the foundation in 1947 established the *Utah Humanities Review*, which was originally edited by Hector Lee's friend and fellow collector, Harold F. Foland, and which published a number of articles and notes on Utah and Mormon folklore.

Unfortunately, the foundation's support of folklore research did not continue into the 1950s. In 1947 Hector Lee left Utah for California, where he devoted his considerable organizing and administrative abilities to the California Folklore Society; the money from the Rockefeller Foundation ran out; and in 1949 the *Utah Humanities Review* became *Western Humanities Review*, abandoning in the process its regional and

folklore emphases. For almost a decade, no organization in Utah spoke on behalf of folklore.

The situation changed in 1957 when Wayland Hand spent the summer at the University of Utah and, recognizing the need for a state folklore organization, stimulated the energetic Harold W. Bentley and other local folklore enthusiasts to organize in May 1958 the Folklore Society of Utah. The society, like the Utah Humanities Research Foundation before it, has been dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Utah folklore. In attempting to meet these goals, it has held a number of successful meetings and workshops, and it has sponsored two important publications: a special Utah issue of *Western Folklore* (April 1959), edited by Jack H. Adamson, and *Lore of Faith and Folly* (1971), edited by Thomas Cheney; but in the main its record has been spotty. It has faltered as often as it has prospered—partly because it has at times lacked adequate leadership, but mostly because it has not been able to generate a broad base of support among the people of the state. In spite of its occasional, if notable, successes, it has tended generally to be a small group of parents without any children.

Ironically, while Utah folklorists were struggling to make folklore better known in their own state, Mormon folk culture became the focus of scholarly attention elsewhere in the nation. Prominent folklorists had long recognized the value of Mormon folklore study and had encouraged Cheney, Fife, and Lee in their work. With the publication of Lee's *The Three Nephites* and the Fifes' *Saints of Sage and Saddle*, and with the growing academic interest in the study of regional folk groups, nationally known scholars began paying heed to the Mormons and to their lore. In 1959 Richard M. Dorson, director of the prestigious folklore program at Indiana University, published his groundbreaking *American Folklore* and included in it a section titled "Utah Mormons." In 1964 he published *Buying the Wind: Regional Folklore in the United States* in which the Mormons were one of the seven major American folk groups surveyed. Both these books have been immensely popular as textbooks in college courses in American folklore, with the result that many graduate and undergraduate students across the land know a good deal more about Mormon folklore than do most Mormons.

The most hopeful signs that this situation may change and that Mormons may themselves begin to share an enthusiasm for the study of Mormon folklore have been the growth of folklore courses in Utah

universities and the closer cooperation that has begun recently between the Utah State Historical Society and the Folklore Society of Utah.

At the University of Utah the first class in folklore was offered in 1945 by Hector Lee. In the following years, Lester A. Hubbard, Louis C. Zucker, Harold W. Bentley, Jack H. Adamson, and Barre Toelken taught occasional folklore courses or worked folklore materials into other classes. In 1966 Jan H. Brunvand, who held a doctoral degree in folklore from Indiana University, joined the faculty and in a short time succeeded in developing a folklore program ranging from introductory and genre courses to classes in the folklore of the American West. At Brigham Young University, Thomas Cheney during the 1950s developed a folk-song class and a graduate course in Mormon folklore. When I came to BYU in 1967, after completing graduate work in folklore at Indiana University, I was able to add introductory courses to the curriculum. At Utah State University a folklore program was developed only recently. Although Austin Fife first joined the USU faculty in 1960, he did not begin teaching folklore until 1971 because of heavy administrative duties; at that time he introduced both general and specialized courses.

One consequence of this intensified teaching has been the establishment of folklore archives (based for the most part on student collecting projects) at all three of our universities. The development of these archives has, in turn, made possible increased research in Mormon folk culture. My own studies in Mormon folklore, for example, would have been impossible without the archives. The second consequence of the teaching has been the creation of an expanding group of young men and women sympathetic to Mormon folklore study and, in some cases, committed enough to it to participate in scholarly conventions and to submit papers for publication in learned journals.

The other event that augurs well for the future of Mormon folklore studies has been increasing cooperation between local historians and folklorists. In 1971 the Folklore Society of Utah, while maintaining control of its own organization, began meeting jointly with the Utah State Historical Society, with one session of the Historical Society's annual meeting devoted to papers on folklore. In the first of these meetings in 1971, all the papers were on Mormon folklore; in each meeting since then half or more of the papers have been devoted to Mormon topics. Further, in every meeting held so far, at least one of the papers has been read by a student from a folklore class; in the 1974 meeting all the papers were by students. The joint meeting has thus given folklorists a much

needed audience and has given historians a chance to learn about folklore (especially about Mormon folklore); equally important, it has provided excellent opportunities for students in the educational programs described above to exercise their developing folklore scholarship.

Perhaps one of the best testimonies to the value of these programs and of the annual meeting with the Historical Society is this issue of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* itself. All four of the papers included are by bright young graduate students recruited to the study of Mormon folklore in university folklore classes (since writing his paper, Richard C. Poulsen has completed his graduate study at the University of Utah and has joined the faculty at Brigham Young University). Two of the papers were presented originally at the Historical Society's annual meeting. I would like to think that this issue of the *Quarterly* represents a positive step forward into a new era of Mormon folklore study.

As we move toward this era, hopefully the misgivings about Mormon folklore studies sometimes felt in the past will no longer accompany us. However, since some people still seem disquieted by the idea of Mormon folklore research it would perhaps be good to review one or two basic principles here.

One of the main reasons for distrust of this research is that in popular usage the term *folklore* often means "falsehood." Hence the religious person dislikes folklore study because it seems to brand stories and beliefs he may hold sacred as untrue, and the scholar dislikes it because it seems nothing more than a study of lies, of old wives' tales. But the folklorist has quite a different understanding of the word *folklore*. To him it means simply that part of our culture that is transmitted through time and space not by the written word nor through institutionalized means of learning but by the process of oral transmission or by customary example—by someone's hearing a story and then repeating it or by observing a traditional practice like quilting and then imitating it.³ The folklorist knows that some of the stories transmitted in this way have originated in the imaginations of creative individuals and that others are derived from descriptions of actual events. He also knows that in many instances it is almost impossible to know which of these two possibilities pertains—whether the origin of a particular story lies ultimately in fact or fancy.

³ For a fuller definition of Mormon folklore, see my "The Paradox of Mormon Folklore," in *Essays on the American West, 1974-1975*, ed. Thomas G. Alexander, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History, no. 6 (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), pp. 127-47.

Consider a recent example. In the General Conference of the Mormon church held last April, speakers in the welfare session stressed the need for family preparedness for difficult times ahead. Speaking of the year's supply of food church members have long been urged to keep in reserve, Bishop Vaughn J. Featherstone urged all members to have this supply on hand by the end of the following year—April 1977.⁴ In the concluding address of the session, President Spencer W. Kimball declared: "We encourage families to have on hand this year's supply; and we say it over and over and over and repeat over and over the scripture of the Lord where He says, 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?'"⁵ Within a short time after the conference, I heard stories from as far away as Texas—attributed to church authorities—that if we do not have our food supply by April 1977, then it will be too late. Another story that developed after the conference and spread widely tells that President Kimball visited his home ward recently and was asked to say a few words. Stepping up to the pulpit, he asked those who had their year's supply to raise their hands. When only a few hands went up, he said that since the congregation had chosen not to follow the counsel of a prophet in the past they obviously would not listen to one now, and he sat down. On a recent visit to Logan, Utah, I heard still another story. A young man told me he had heard of people on the way to a temple who had picked up an old hitchhiker—later thought to be one of the Three Nephites—who had warned them to get in their food supply and had then vanished from the car.

Now what are we to make of these stories? Are they true? It is certainly true that in the welfare session Bishop Featherstone and President Kimball made the statements cited above. It is true that these statements and subsequent church efforts to encourage food storage have inspired many of the stories circulating among the people today. And it is true that the stories reflect something of the urgent need to store food felt by many church members since the conference. But that is about as far as we can go. The story attributed to a church authority is too nebulous to pin down. From what I have been able to learn in checking out the story told about President Kimball, the account seems to be apocryphal, though it is true in the sense that it makes the same point President Kimball made in the welfare session. The Nephite account is, in my judgment, a revival of an old story. During the 1950s, when the cold war was at its height and

⁴ Vaughn J. Featherstone, "Food Storage," *The Ensign* 6 (May 1976): 116–18.

⁵ Spencer W. Kimball, "Family Preparedness," *The Ensign* 6 (May 1976): 125

fears of nuclear holocaust were rampant, the same story spread rapidly through Mormon communities. When international tensions eased, the story ceased to be told.⁶ With the intensified emphasis on food storage we are experiencing now, it may begin to circulate again. As I write this, I realize that though the facts at hand persuade me not to believe the story, there really is no way I can actually prove that one of the Three Nephites did not recently appear to someone and warn him to store food. Perhaps Austin Fife's comment on stories like this is best: "They are from absolutely true to absolutely untrue, and you can never tell where you are."⁷ To people who find religious inspiration in these stories and who are not entirely pleased by such an explanation, I should point out that even if all the stories about impending disaster and about food storage could be disproved, this would in no way discredit the food storage program promoted by the church. It would seem to me that believing and committed church members would want to store food not because they have heard of Nephites hitchhiking across the land spreading stories of disaster, but because church leaders have been advising them to do so for the past forty years.

While what I have just said may make the religious person at least a little more comfortable with folklore, it will probably do little to satisfy the scholar. If folk stories cannot be authenticated, if they are at best legends based on a kernel of truth, why, one might ask, should they be made the object of serious study?

There are several reasons. First, if a group of people believes a body of stories to be true, then those stories will have an impact on their lives. The folklorist studies the stories to discover how they mold the behavior of those who tell and listen to them. With the food storage accounts, for example, he studies the way the stories both reinforce church teaching and persuade people to conform to it. Second, since people tell stories about those things that interest them most or are most important to them, the stories serve as a kind of barometer, giving one good insight into a group's dominant values and concerns, its anxieties and stresses. Third, because people change the stories they tell as they pass them along, putting much of themselves into them in the process, the stories provide excellent information of the attitudes of the people toward their social and religious environment and toward the events of the day. Thus, as I have argued

⁶ For a study of this particular story, see my "The Vanishing Hitchhiker among the Mormons," *Indiana Folklore* 7 (1975): 79-97.

⁷ Austin E. Fife, personal interview, Logan, Utah May 31, 1972.

elsewhere, though some "folklore may be factually false, it is psychologically true. Students of Mormon culture turn to it not to discover the ledger-book truths of history but to fathom the truths of the human heart and mind."⁸

Let us consider another example. Following the death of billionaire Howard Hughes last April, a document purported to be his will mysteriously showed up on a desk in the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City, brought there by an unknown messenger. The will left one sixteenth of Hughes's estate to the church. Almost immediately jokes and stories about this event began to circulate among the Mormon people. According to one of these, during the 1950s Hughes visited David O. McKay, then president of the Mormon church, lamented the way he had lived in the past and wondered if there might be any hope for himself in the hereafter. President McKay responded: "Well, Howard, you know where there's a *will* there's a way." A second joke told that when Hughes was met at the Pearly Gates by Saint Peter (in some versions by President McKay) he was not allowed to enter heaven because in the Mormon church a tithe really means one tenth of one's goods, not one sixteenth. A third story, this time a much more serious one, explained that the Hughes will had been brought to the Church Office Building by one of the Three Nephites.

Though new in subject matter, all three of these stories make use of traditional forms. The first is a shaggy dog story in which a well-known proverb is worked into a narrative and given a humorous twist. The second is a Saint Peter, Pearly Gates joke in which a well-known person or a representative of a well-known group of people is given a hard time by Saint Peter as he tries to enter heaven. The third is a typical Nephite account in which one of the old apostles appears, performs a good deed, and then disappears. All three of the stories show how quickly an event that catches the fancy of a people passes into folklore. And all three tell us something about the attitudes of the people toward the event.

The first two stories, for example, though often told for simple entertainment, nevertheless have a critical edge. For years I have heard people make fun of what they consider an overly materialistic emphasis in the church by joking about Brigham Young's statue in downtown Salt Lake City, which has Brigham's back to the temple and his hand extended toward Zion's First National Bank. The sentiment of these jokes is expressed in the following folk jingle:

⁸ "The Paradox of Mormon Folklore," p. 132.

Here stands Brigham
 Like a bird on a perch,
 With his hand to the bank
 And his back to the church.

The Howard Hughes jokes contain something of this sentiment, suggesting as they do that with the appropriate material contribution, the way to heaven might be open to Hughes after all. Even the Nephite story reflects some of this same materialism, since in this instance the Nephite performs an act designed not to help an individual in need, as is usually the case in the Nephite stories, but rather to benefit the church financially. Of course the Nephite story also reveals other attitudes. It shows, for instance, how some Mormons, eager to see the hand of God in all things, find in the stories of Nephite appearances an easy and ready explanation for mysterious events not readily explainable.

I am fully aware that one can make no safe generalizations about Mormon values and attitudes on the basis of the few items cited here. But I am convinced that given a large enough body of data such generalizations can be made. And the data exists. It lines the shelves of the university archives discussed earlier in this paper, and more of it is coming in all the time. Through the careful study and interpretation of this material, we may well gain an understanding of the Mormon ethos denied us in more conventional sources.

And this, then, is the purpose of Mormon folklore study—to understand. Not to ridicule, not to attack or to defend the faith (for that would make one a propagandist), not to become connoisseurs of titillating stories, but to understand Mormon culture by viewing it from the inside-out, through those stories and practices which, as Alan Dundes points out, give us “a people’s own unselfconscious picture of themselves.”⁹

Until recently the understanding folklorists most frequently sought was an understanding of the past. They tended to view items of folklore as cultural artifacts surviving from an earlier period and hence primarily useful for the reconstruction of early Mormon social life. Thus of the Three Nephites Hector Lee wrote: “They afford an uncensored approach, through the substrata of Mormon thought, to pioneer concepts, attitudes, and impulses.”¹⁰ Operating from this point of view, folklore

⁹ Alan Dundes, *Analytic Essays in Folklore* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. xi.

¹⁰ Hector Lee, *The Three Nephites: The Substance and Significance of the Legend in Folklore*, University of New Mexico Press Publications in Language and Literature, no. 2 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1949), p. 126.

collectors headed for the field in an urgent attempt to gather in the remnants of the old stories and songs before they disappeared forever. Contemporary folklorists, on the other hand, believe that while folklore does indeed survive from one period to the next, the people who keep it alive as they pass it through time and space so alter it in the process that it tells us as much about the culture of the storytellers as it does about the past in which it originated. Further, folklorists today realize that although some forms of folklore occasionally die out new forms quickly take their place. For just as pioneer Mormons created folklore as they responded to the circumstances of their environment, so contemporary Mormons generate lore as they come to terms with the joys and pains of their own lives. Thus folklore, like language, is a cultural universal. As long as we have man we will have folklore. And folklore research, far from being the study of a dwindling body of data, is the study of living traditions that are constantly re-created as we respond to the changing circumstances of our times. What this means is that the study of Mormon folklore will never be completed. The Fifes' *Saints of Sage and Saddle* is an extremely important book, but it is dated. The Mormon world that existed when the Fifes wrote the book is not the same Mormon world that exists today. As our culture changes and as the changes are reflected in our lore, we must continue to collect and to reinterpret.

Not only must we reinterpret Mormon lore to understand the changes occurring in Mormon culture; we must also reassess the methodological and theoretical approaches we have used to study this lore. Most studies to date, including my own, have focused on Utah Mormons and have overlooked the fact that Mormons in New York or Japan or Finland are also members of the church who in their different environments may have created a body of Mormon lore quite different from that known in Utah. Many studies have assumed a Mormon cultural homogeneity that in reality simply does not exist, supposing that to know one Mormon was to know them all, and ignoring the fact that rural and urban Mormons, educated and uneducated Mormons, male and female Mormons, and born-in-the-church and convert Mormons quite often view the world through different eyes and respond to it differently in their lore. Because folk stories make fascinating study for their own sake, many researchers have been content to focus on them alone and have overlooked both the storytelling context in which an item is narrated and the impact of the narration on the behavior of the participants. The same holds true for the study of material culture and folk belief, where the emphasis has

been on the object created or the ritual practiced rather than on the lives of the creators and the practitioners. When a large number of individual studies addressing themselves to these and other problems have been completed, then perhaps we will be ready for a new synthesis of Mormon folklore. In the meantime we must be content with smaller-scale studies.

The essays in this issue of the *Quarterly*, therefore, are necessary stepping-stones toward the creation of a larger picture. In these essays, Clifton Jolley reinterprets the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and the stories told about it in the light of archetypal myth criticism; Richard Poulsen shows what happens to earlier folk medicinal practices surviving now in a changed social environment; Susan Peterson shows us how the desires, attitudes, and tensions of contemporary Mormons are reflected in their apocalyptic lore; and Linda Harris demonstrates that in creating a legend about a modern heroine—Jessie Evans Smith—Mormons have, as is often the case in legend formation, succeeded primarily in creating an image of themselves. Hopefully, as readers find in these essays both strengths and inadequacies, they will be moved to pick up their own pens—to remedy the inadequacies and to build on the strengths.



C. C. A. Christensen painting of Joseph Smith's assassination shows legendary light that prevented mutilation of his body.

The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith: An Archetypal Study

BY CLIFTON HOLT JOLLEY

IN AN ARTICLE RATHER sketchily outlining "Folk Elements in the Formation of the Mormon Personality," which appeared in the second issue of *Brigham Young University Studies*, Austin E. Fife wrote: "I have at times felt that not only is the Mormon folk culture uniquely American but excessively so, that in some areas we actually exaggerate American qualities."¹ Fife is peripherally correct, but the scope of his observation may not be as broad as it first appears. It is true that Mormonism has

Mr. Jolley is a doctoral candidate in English at Brigham Young University.

¹ *Brigham Young University Studies* 1 (1959-60): 6.

been superficially drafted into the American cultural mainstream² and that Mormons have had an unhappy tendency to view their history in terms dictated by an American and often anti-Mormon culture,³ but there is a deeper, far more significant influence on the Mormon lore; and this influence, rather than isolating Mormon culture within narrow, ethnic boundaries, has the effect of uniting it with a broad, archetypally defined cosmological view.

Carl Jung defined *archetypes* as "the contents of the collective unconscious . . . primordial types . . . universal images that have existed in the minds of men since the remotest times," and went on to isolate *myth* as one of the primary expressions of such images.⁴ It should be emphasized that the term *myth* has no pejorative connotation. It does not suggest a fiction nor imply that the elements of the narrative may not be historically accurate. Rather, the term suggests a pattern by which events are shaped and implies a quality of belief and importance in the lives of the folk group. Even Jung was hesitant to suggest precisely how this pattern is arrived at—where it comes from—but archetypes may be derived by way of common experience. Inasmuch as there are fundamental experiences common to all men (birth, physical pain and pleasure, biological imperatives such as death, etc.), it is obvious that, despite cultural differences, men have a tendency to view certain phenomena in similar ways. The shaping of experience to conform to such patterns (archetypes) helps to explain the gap psychologists have recognized between *sensation* and *perception* and further indicates for the historian and anthropologist the reason for the existence of parallel types even under circumstances where diffusion is not a plausible explanation. Indeed, even when diffu-

² As early as 1847, John Greenleaf Whittier had written: "Once in the world's history we were to have a Yankee prophet, and we have had him in Joe Smith." Whittier went on to describe Smith's achievements in terms of fundamental American capitalism. See William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historical Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 159.

³ LeGrand Richards, presently an apostle of the Mormon church, reported a conversation Dr. Andrew D. White supposedly had with Count Leo Tolstoi in 1892 in which Tolstoi reprimanded White for his ignorance of Mormonism: "I am greatly surprised and disappointed that a man of your great learning and position should be so ignorant on this important subject. The Mormon people teach the American religion; their principles teach the people not only of Heaven and its attendant glories, but how to live so that their social and economic relations with each other are placed on a sound basis." See Richards's *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1963), p. 436. This kind of rhetoric may prove to be less than adequate for a church that, in the past decade, has been increasingly aware of the need to see its gospel in an international context; and, indeed, it may be that what has been so long looked upon as an "American" phenomenon is more like American culture by way of common origin than by way of influence.

⁴ "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *Twentieth Century Criticism: The Major Statements*, ed. William J. Handy and Max Westbrook (New York: The Free Press, 1974), p. 206.

sion is the more obvious possibility, the influence of archetypal patterning should not be disregarded, for the "spiritual" quality of the archetype, as Jung described it, lends it marvelous power. "That people should succumb to these eternal images," he wrote, "is entirely normal, in fact it is what these images are for. They are created out of the primal stuff of revelation and reflect the ever-unique experience of divinity."⁵ This, then, is myth—the narrative expression of the "divine" archetypes. This is *myth* as it existed in the aesthetic of art historian André Jolles (ca. 1874–1946), for whom it implied

a greater seriousness than either saga or legend. It has *dignitas* and *auctoritas*. It is a revelation of the way things are, of the cosmos seen as unchanging, world without end, as it is now and ever shall be. A myth, Jolles suggests, is the answer to an unspoken question about a matter of great import. . . . Mythic consciousness is related to oracular or prophetic consciousness. . . . myths deal only with the eternal.⁶

The Prophet Joseph Smith, like the Prophet Mohammed, satisfies these criteria as to the importance and scope of his life; and regardless of the actuality or fabrication of particular events, that life is mythic—it has the effect of satisfying eternal questions for the Mormon folkgroup. I realize that folklorists are often more comfortable describing narratives such as that arising from the life of Joseph Smith in terms of *legend*, reserving *myth* for prehistoric accounts of a metaphysical nature.⁷ But for the purposes of this paper, *myth* will be used in reference to the Joseph Smith narrative tradition so as to distinguish its metaphysical satisfactions from lesser satisfactions of the *legend*.

From Jung's vast sea of the "collective unconscious," then, this paper nets a single archetypal influence by which to examine the Joseph Smith myth; this influence or pattern may best be described, in the words of Bruce Rosenberg, as the "martyred hero"—a model so powerful that it has the effect of influencing the way in which historical events are assimilated, ordered, and shaped or "warped" by the folkgroup.⁸ "Such is the fame and respect that the American people have afforded [the

⁵ Ibid., p. 209.

⁶ Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 45.

⁷ William Bascom, "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives," *Journal of American Folklore*, 78 (1965): 3–19.

⁸ "The heroic aspects of Custer's last stand," Rosenberg wrote, "arose quite naively in the imaginations of many Americans, some of whom actually participated in the battle itself and who should have known better." *Custer and the Epic of Defeat* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974), p. 183.

martyred hero],” wrote Rosenberg, “that they have placed him in a very exclusive Valhalla, usually reserved for only one man in a culture’s history.”⁹ This veneration results from what Joseph Campbell, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, has observed as the inclination of individuals in the folkgroup to view themselves in terms of the hero—“not the physical self visible in the mirror, but the king within”¹⁰—and leads to a devotion which, far from being promiscuous, is focused on that one man, that hero who most ideally fulfills the expectations of the group, expectations at least in part determined by a universally prevalent archetypal pattern. Caught up in, and at times perhaps managing the effects of such archetypal patterning, Joseph Smith became that “mirror” by which the Mormon folk group understands itself. As Josiah Quincy prophetically noted in an evaluation not otherwise complimentary:

Fanatic, imposter, charlatan, he may have been; but these hard names furnish no solution to the problem he presents to us. Fanatics and imposters are living and dying every day, and their memory is buried with them; but the wonderful influence which this founder of a religion exerted and still exerts throws him into relief before us, not as a rogue to be incriminated, but as a phenomenon to be explained.¹¹

The “phenomenon” of Joseph Smith, I would suggest, may be most satisfactorily explained—for Mormon, folklorist, and historian alike—in terms of the archetypal shaping of his life to conform to the martyred hero model. The elements of the narrative that has resulted range from historical fact to what may be less than historically accurate, but the weaving of fact and fancy has produced a tapestry of personality and events that is far more significant and profound than any sterile recounting of historical data may imply: it has produced the Joseph Smith Myth, by which a people are defined.

Although the veneration of a hero by his people may not come until late in life when he has demonstrated himself to be worthy, or even after his death, that veneration will reach back to an examination of the hero in his youth and infancy. Campbell wrote:

the makers of legend have seldom rested content to regard the world’s great heroes as mere human beings who broke past the horizons that limited their fellows and returned with such boons as any man with equal

⁹ Ibid., pp. 10–11.

¹⁰ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 365.

¹¹ “Joseph Smith at Nauvoo,” *Figures of the Past: From the Leaves of Old Journals . . .* (1883; reprint ed., Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), p. 317.

faith and courage might have found. On the contrary, the tendency has always been to endow the hero with extraordinary powers from the moment of birth. . . .¹²

Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, recorded the pressures brought to bear on her to conform to this aspect of hero model:

I shall say nothing respecting him until he arrived at the age of fourteen. However, in this I am aware that some of my readers will be disappointed, for I suppose, from questions which are frequently asked me, that it is thought by some that I shall be likely to tell many very remarkable incidents which attended his childhood; but, as nothing occurred during his early life except those trivial circumstances which are common to that state of human existence, I pass them in silence.¹³

Although her attempt at biography is credulous and quaint, Mrs. Smith seemed to try very hard to be honest in her recollections. In opposition to her insistence on the "common" childhood of her son, however, she had, in an earlier chapter, described the precocious behavior of the five-year-old and infirm Joseph.¹⁴ Remembering Campbell's observation concerning the nature of the hero as a child, it should come as no surprise that it is this story of the young Joseph's refusal to take wine as an anesthetic to a serious operation that is more often repeated than his mother's later disclaimer.¹⁵

Campbell went on to point out that "heroism is predestined, rather simply achieved," and, although Mormons would probably prefer "fore-ordained," 2 Nephi 3:14-15 of the Book of Mormon seems to fulfill this expectation for Joseph Smith:

14. And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins, shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of the fulfilling of this promise;

15. And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father.

As confirmation of his divine ordination, Joseph recounted having been visited by God and Jesus Christ, which heavenly emissaries assured him of his calling and promised that they would send yet other heavenly

¹² Campbell, *The Hero*, p. 319. Campbell also stated, "the myths agree that an extraordinary capacity is required to face and survive such experience. The infancies abound in anecdotes of precious strength, cleverness, and wisdom" (p. 327).

¹³ *History of Joseph Smith* (1901; reprint ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), p. 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-58.

¹⁵ In Joseph's own account of the event he makes no mention of the wine, although he does take credit for not allowing the surgeons to amputate his leg—a prohibition Lucy Mack Smith attributed to herself in her version. See Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), Appendix C, pp. 165-66.

visitors. His apotheosis was not immediate, however, and the boy was suffered to wait several years before he was introduced fully to his prophetic calling—during which time he more fully prepared himself. At the end of approximately three and one-half years of waiting, the boy was visited, while alone in his room, by an angel who revealed to him the work God had for him to do, which was to cause him great tribulation as well as bring him great joy.¹⁶ This episode in Joseph's career roughly corresponds to that aspect of the hero which Campbell described as

a time of extreme danger, impediment, or disgrace. He is thrown inward to his own depths or outward to the unknown; either way, what he touches is a darkness unexplored. And this is a zone of unsuspected presences, benign as well as malignant: an angel appears. . . . Fostered . . . alone in some little room . . . the young world-apprentice learns the lesson of the seed powers, which reside just beyond the sphere of the measured and the named.¹⁷

Suffice it to say that the parallels between the mythic model and the Smith account are too numerous for a point-by-point explication in the limited space of this paper.

Although Rosenberg allowed a certain "erratic" element in any culture's isolation and apotheosis of a hero, he noted that the hero is generally a character of peculiar charm and charisma.¹⁸ For Joseph Smith this "charisma" lay in what Howard J. Booth has described as a reciprocal love and respect that existed between Joseph and his followers:

Love and friendship were the guiding principles of Joseph Smith's philosophy of life. . . . The emphasis Joseph gave here was not the result of some moralistic view of obeying the ethical teachings of Jesus alone. Rather it was more an extension of his own warm personality relating itself compassionately to the lives of others. "Love begets love," Joseph said. Verification of this statement is revealed by the apparent love most of his followers had for him.¹⁹

In exception to Booth's thesis, however, it should be noted that there were periods in Joseph's career, and indeed throughout his life, when large and influential groups of his adherents did not reciprocate whatever love may or may not have been shown them. He found it necessary to leave Ohio by night to escape the mob of Mormon and Gentile citizenry angered at the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society Antitank-

¹⁶ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Brigham H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902-32), 1:2-15.

¹⁷ Campbell, *The Hero*, pp. 326-27.

¹⁸ Rosenberg, *Custer*, pp. 131, 112-16.

¹⁹ Howard J. Booth, "An Image of Joseph Smith, Jr.: A Personality Study," *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action* 1 (1970): 11.

ing Company, and it was just such a group of disenchanted adherents who fomented the events that led to the martyrdom of the prophet.

Nevertheless, it is true that Joseph Smith's followers seem to have generally regarded him with an especially warm respect and feeling of easy accessibility to greatness. Howard Coray, speaking of his wife's affection for the prophet, wrote: "I have frequently heard her say that he himself was the greatest miracle to her, she [had] ever seen."²⁰ Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner remembered an instance that seems to support Booth's thesis of "love and friendship" and a genuinely compassionate nature as the Mormon prophet's greatest assets in relating to his people:

One morning Joseph came while we were eating breakfast of cold mush. It was after we had lost most of our things and we were very poor. . . . When Joseph came in Mother and I looked at each other and must have shown it for he asked for some, first saying "Brother Burk that mush looks good. I like mush." Of course he asked to have some. He ate heartily but we thought he did it to lessen our embarrassment.²¹

From the world he insisted on many titles—prophet, president, lieutenant general, mayor—but to his people he was "Brother Joseph."

It should be stressed that this affection for the prophet was heightened by a paradox: first impressions seemed to leave people feeling that Joseph was anything but what a prophet should be. Wilford Woodruff, who was to become the fourth president of the Mormon church, said that his "first introduction was not of a kind to satisfy the preconceived notions of the sectarian mind as to what a prophet ought to be, and how he should appear."²² This should come as little wonder if Josiah Quincy's description of the prophet at his first meeting with the man is accurate: "He wore striped pantaloons, a linen jacket, which had not lately seen the washtub, and a beard of some three days' growth."²³

The effect the paradox between status and appearance has had on a person seems to have been largely determined by that person's disposition concerning matters religious. For the devout and the humanitarian seeking to demonstrate the breadth of his compassion, Joseph was as he was remembered by Wandle Mace: "a fine looking man, tall and well proportioned, strong and active, light complexion, blue eyes and light

²⁰ Journal of Howard Coray, p. 12, manuscript, Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.

²¹ "Biographical Sketch of Mary Elizabeth (Rollins) Lightner," p. 5, collected by Juanita Brooks, typescript, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

²² Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff, Fourth President of the Church . . .* (1909; reprint ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), p. 39.

²³ Quincy, "Joseph Smith at Nauvoo," pp. 320-21.

hair, and very little beard. He had a free and easy manner, not the least affectation, yet bold and independent, and very interesting and eloquent speech."²⁴ Howard Coray echoed this impression when he remarked that "the Prophet . . . was always equal to the occasion, and perfectly master of the situation; and possessed the power to make everybody realize his superiority, which they *evinced* in an unmitakeable manner."²⁵ However, what Mace remembered as an unaffected and independent manner impressed those who were antagonistic to the Mormons, such as Henry Caswall, quite differently. In a contemporaneous account, Caswall described Joseph Smith as:

a coarse, plebian, sensual person in aspect, and his countenance exhibits a curious mixture of the knave and the clown. His hands are large and fat, and on one of his fingers he wears a massive gold ring, upon which I saw an inscription. His eyes appear deficient in that open and straightforward expression which often characterizes an honest man. His dress was of coarse country manufacture, and his white hat was enveloped by a piece of black crape. . . .²⁶

Likewise, Eudocia Baldwin Marsh wrote that "The Smiths were large men, with coarse heavy features, Joseph in particular a stupid, sleepy looking man, with no hint of the intellectual or ascetic one would naturally look for in the face of a Prophet, Saint or seer."²⁷ Almost as though in response to Coray's observation, Charlotte Haven wrote that Joseph Smith

has a large head and phrenologists would unhesitatingly pronounce it a bad one, for the organs situated in the back part are decidedly the most prominent. He is also very round-shouldered. . . . I, who had expected to be overwhelmed by his eloquence, was never more disappointed than when he commenced his discourse by relating incidents of his journey. This he did in a loud voice, and his language and manner were the coarsest possible. His object seemed to be to amuse and excite laughter in his audience.²⁸

The reason for the laudatory descriptions of Joseph Smith by members of the Mormon folk group is obvious: the hero is usually beautiful and/or accomplished. But lest one assume the observations of non-Mormons

²⁴ Wandle Mace, "Autobiographical Sketch of Wandle Mace," p. 28, manuscript, Huntington Library.

²⁵ Coray journal, p. 8.

²⁶ *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo in 1842* (London, 1843), p. 35.

²⁷ "Mormons in Hancock County: A Reminiscence," ed. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 64 (1971): 36.

²⁸ "Charlotte Haven Writes from Nauvoo," in Mulder and Mortensen, *Among the Mormons*, p. 120. It is curious how many of these antagonistic accounts sound so very much alike, as do their more favorable counterparts sound like one another.

to be implicitly more reliable, it should be remembered that Caswall's account was self-servingly prejudicial in its anti-Mormon bias, Marsh was only fifteen years old when Joseph and his brother Hyrum were martyred and did not record her account for more than forty years, and Charlotte Haven had a particular preference for the more conventional sermon styles of the Evangelical movement, evidenced by her approval of "Sidney Rigdon, the most learned man among the Latter Day Saints. . . . He has an intelligent countenance, a courteous manner, and speaks grammatically."²⁹ True to Campbell's observation that the hero functions as an extension of self, a manifestation of the "king within," those supportive of the culture that the hero represents will tend to eulogize him physically, while those who stand in opposition will oppose whatever accreditation physical beauty may suggest.

The development of Joseph Smith in the lore of his people as a personality of heroic proportions—his "predestination," precocious childhood, visits and instructions from heavenly emissaries, physical beauty, and intellectual capacity—leads finally to what Campbell refers to as "the last act in the biography of the hero" and comprises the most significant aspect of this study of the martyred hero: "the death or departure. Here the whole sense of the life is epitomized."³⁰ The principal events in martyred-hero narratives have been outlined by Rosenberg:

Defeat (death) is caused by betrayal.

The traitor is often "posed" as a foil to the hero, whose commitment to some transcendent ideal is in sharp relief with the villain's petty lust.

The hero may be flawed.

The enemy must outnumber the martyred.

The enemy may be brave or depraved.

The "friendlies" are valiant.

The hero must inflict heavy casualties on the enemy.

The death occurs in a high place where the hero is lifted above the heads of attackers, such as on a hilltop or ridge.

There is a final call for help.

The hero fights to the last and is often the last to die.

There is a lone survivor who escapes to tell the true tale of the martyrdom.

The hero's body is either spared mutilation or decapitated.

The death of the hero is avenged.

The hero's fall is tragic, for by it he gives up his life to gain some higher spiritual reward.

After he has fallen, the hero is honored.³¹

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Campbell, *The Hero*, p. 356.

³¹ See Rosenberg, *Custer*, pp. 231–45.

Rosenberg, of course, was dealing with circumstances arising from the hero's participation in a military conflict, so one would not expect every one of the narrative points of the Joseph Smith myth to correspond with the Rosenberg model; the surprising thing is that, with only slight variation—and that usually in terms of deletion—Rosenberg's observation provides an excellent base for ordering the events and tales surrounding the martyrdom of Joseph Smith.

DEFEAT CAUSED BY BETRAYAL

Ivan J. Barrett, in his history of the Mormon church to 1846, began his chapter 29 ("Tragedy at Carthage") with a section titled "A Judas in the Midst of the Saints."²² The "Judas" was actually a group of apostates led by "William and Wilson Law, Chauncey and Francis Higbee, Robert and Charles Foster, and William Marks. All of these men had rejected the Prophet's teachings. . . . and plotted the death of Joseph Smith."²³ To accomplish the overthrow of the prophet's power, if not his death, they published a newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor* which was destroyed by order of the Nauvoo city council. As a result, Francis Higbee and the others fled to Carthage where a writ was sworn out for the arrest of Joseph Smith on the charge of riot. Although the Mormon prophet was initially acquitted of the charges, it was this "betrayal" that led ultimately to his incarceration and death at Carthage, Illinois.

TRAITOR A FOIL TO HERO/FLAWLESS HERO

Throughout the martyrdom chapter of Barrett's book the betrayers are vilified as men who had succumbed to "lustful tendencies" and were eagerly following "the sinful course which John C. Bennett had followed."²⁴ They, of course, serve as a perfect foil to Joseph Smith who, when finally faced with the return to Carthage, is reported to have said: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I SHALL DIE INNOCENT, AND IT SHALL YET BE SAID OF ME—HE WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD."²⁵ Where there is a Judas there must be a Christ, or perhaps it works the other way around. Whichever the case, the parallels are obvious: the sacrificial

²² *Joseph Smith and the Restoration: A History of the Church to 1846*, 2d ed. (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), p. 587.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 589.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 135:4.

lamb, without spot, is delivered into the hands of sinners as an offering that his people might be saved,³⁶ thus fulfilling the highest function of the martyred hero and illustrating Campbell's observation to be correct: "Needless to say, the hero would be no hero if death held for him any terror; the first condition is reconciliation with the grave."³⁷ It is by reason of this parallel, then, that the Joseph Smith myth does not allow the hero to be flawed.³⁸

ENEMY OUTNUMBERS THE MARTYRED/
ENEMY DEPRAVED/"FRIENDLIES" VALIANT

Even the accounts of the martyrdom that were most happy about the death of Joe Smith, the Mormon prophet, referred to the group that perpetrated the deed as a "mob" and decried the circumstances under which it occurred. Although the mob may not have numbered as many as the "150-200 persons"³⁹ of the Mormon account, they did greatly outnumber the four men incarcerated at Carthage. Rosenberg said that in such accounts the enemy may be either brave or depraved. While a noble foe may be an advantage in a battlefield narrative, such as that of the Custer legend, neither the historic setting nor the dramatic requirements of the Joseph Smith myth allow for a brave enemy. Having accomplished the bloody deed, the assassins were scattered by nothing more than a false cry that "The Mormons are coming!"⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Willard Richards nobly cared for the wounded John Taylor, rounding out an experience inside the jail that has been noted for the selfless concern of each of the prisoners for his fellow's safety.⁴¹

³⁶ It seems that Joseph Smith at least saw himself in these terms. Anticipating the Carthage experience, he said: "My blood shall be spilt upon the ground like water, and my body consigned to the silent tomb. . . . I do not regard my own life. I am ready to be offered a sacrifice for this people." (Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:498-500.) Nor is this peculiar to Joseph Smith; Rosenberg (*Custer*, p. 131) recorded that Custer was often likened to the Christ.

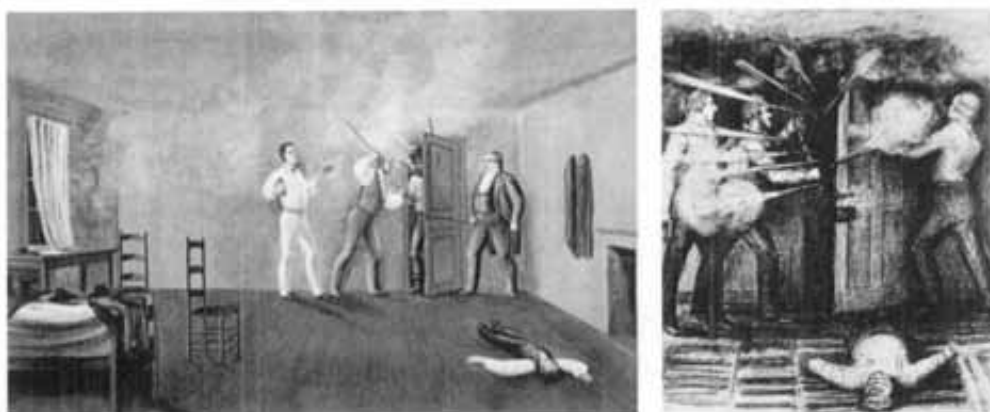
³⁷ Campbell, *The Hero*, p. 356.

³⁸ The tendency to apologize the events surrounding the death of Joseph Smith was so strong that even the sending for wine earlier in the evening has evidently been explained by some as a sacramental gesture (this explanation will be seen to significantly relate to the apotheosis of the prophet at the time of his death). John Taylor in his narrative of the evening, however, stated quite emphatically that "it was no such thing; our spirits were generally dull and heavy, and it was sent for to revive us. . . . I believe we all drank of the wine, and gave some to one or two of the prison guards" (Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:101). Considering the needs that might be felt by members of the folk group seeking comfort and inspiration in the martyrdom, and remembering the stricter modern standards of Mormons in regard to alcoholic beverages, it is understandable why this part of Taylor's account does not enjoy a popular currency in the myth.

³⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 135:1.

⁴⁰ Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration*, p. 616.

⁴¹ See John Taylor's account of the martyrdom in Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:101-6.



Two visual representations of the murder room above the Carthage jail. Left: a painting by C. G. A. Christensen. Right: the same scene by another artist shows nine guns firing into room.

HERO INFLECTS HEAVY CASUALTIES

Obviously, since Joseph Smith was not operating in his military capacity at the time of the martyrdom, the requirement that he inflict heavy casualties on the enemy is somewhat mitigated, and the fact that he was relatively defenseless has the effect of heightening the pathos of his circumstance and intensifying the depravity of his attackers. Nevertheless, there were accounts shortly following his death that the "pepper-box" he had ineffectively fired around the door had killed as many as three men. These accounts, however, have not been the ones to survive, and the image that Mormons revere is that of a prophet who, having foreseen the occasion of his martyrdom, waited serenely in an upper room for death to take him home.

DEATH OCCURS IN A HIGH PLACE

There is no reason why the event of the prophet's death could not have occurred elsewhere, of course, and it should have taken place in the cell on the ground floor of the Carthage jail, but it happened in an upper room of the jail—in "the upper room." Although corresponding as the site does with Custer's hill, the more striking image brought to mind is that of Christ's last Passover feast: the man is there with a few of his closest followers, wine has been sent for, the crucifixion is at hand.

FINAL CALL FOR HELP/HERO IS THE LAST TO DIE

But death comes in the form of Illinois, not Roman, soldiers this time. (The term "soldiers" in reference to the Carthage Greys is hardly

accurate, but whatever they were comes close enough to a soldier to establish the parallel.) Battling them as best he was able with a pistol that misfired as often as not, Joseph saw his brother Hyrum fatally wounded and John Taylor struck down as he attempted to escape through the window. Moving to the same window, Joseph called out, perhaps for assistance from Masons in the mob, "O Lord, My God!"⁴² Although John Taylor and Willard Richards continued to fear for their lives, with the death of Joseph Smith the conflict ended.

LONE SURVIVOR/HERO'S BODY SPARED MUTILATION

But the myth had just begun. Within hours of the martyrdom one William M. Daniels, the "lone survivor" demanded by the model, had entered Nauvoo with an incredible "mob's-eye-view" of what took place. Insisting that Joseph was not shot until *after* he had fallen to the ground, the most often remembered passage in his account described how the mob attempted to brutalize the body of the fallen prophet:

The ruffian, of whom I have spoken, who set him against the well-curb, now gathered a bowie knife for the purpose of severing his head from his body. He raised the knife and was in the attitude of striking, when a light, so sudden and powerful, burst from the heavens upon the bloody scene, (passing its vivid chain between Joseph and his murderers,) that they were struck with terrified awe and filled with consternation. This light, in its appearance and potency, baffles all powers of description. The arm of the ruffian, that held the knife, fell powerless; the muskets of the four, who fired, fell to the ground, and they all stood like marble statues, not having the power to move a single limb of their bodies.⁴³

The decapitation of legendary heroes is a common aspect of the hero model, as Rosenberg pointed out:

One story . . . told of Constantine's head on display atop a column in the Augustan Forum. . . . Saul's head was displayed by the Philistines; Byrhtnoth was said to have been buried headless; Lazar's head was preserved by a Turkish boy before it was miraculously rejoined to his

⁴² Although B. H. Roberts allowed that Joseph may have been calling for assistance from Masonic brethren he recognized in the mob (and an editorial that appeared in the July 15, 1844, *Times and Seasons* supports this view), Roberts believed this was unlikely. Dr. Keith Perkins, professor of church history at Brigham Young University, points out that Joseph had seen by John Taylor's example the folly of expecting mercy or escape in the direction of the window. Whatever his intention, the folk tradition is that his last words were uttered as a final address to God. See Brigham H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 2:287.

⁴³ *A Correct Account of the Murder of Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith, at Carthage, on the 27th Day of June, 1844*, in *Murder of an American Prophet: Events and Prejudices Surrounding the Killing of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Carthage, Illinois, June 27, 1844*, ed. Keith Huntress (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 175-76.

body; and occasional stories of decapitation were told about the Little Bighorn mutilations.⁴⁴

Custer, however, miraculously escaped mutilation of any kind, thus fulfilling one of the mythic prerequisites of the martyred hero's death. But Daniels's inventive account includes *both* of the possibilities, perhaps to make up for the fact that he has the prophet descend from his high place to die. As one might expect, however, the Mormon folkgroup has "edited" the Daniels account; and although there is a common knowledge of the villains' being driven off by lightning there is little discussion of the awkward and inglorious slaying at the well.

Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, in their recent and excellent book on the trial of the Joseph Smith assassins, quite handily and appropriately laid to rest any lingering notion of historical accuracy regarding the Daniels "Correct Account" of the incident, but they somewhat underplayed the impact that account has had on the Mormon culture. "Though apparently comforting to the rank and file of Mormons still mourning their fallen leader," they wrote, "Daniels's account of the wondrous light was never accepted in official Church accounts and has been rejected by responsible Mormon historians." Relegating a belief in the account to grief-stricken contemporaries of the prophet and an "unofficial publication identified with the Mormon Church" has the effect of minimizing a belief that has influenced and symbolized the thinking of the Mormon community.⁴⁵ C. C. A. Christensen caught the mood of it in his huge painting of the event, and the painting has been as faithfully reproduced and believed in as have the many fictitious representations of Custer as the last man alive on Custer Ridge. Sunday School and Seminary teachers have taught it to their classes; it has been preached from the pulpit and occupied the attention of Fireside chats; it is a part of the very fabric of the Mormon belief in a God who occupies himself with the slightest concerns of his children and is bound to act on and against the murder of his prophet. Thus, in a Sunday School catechism published in 1882, thirty-eight years after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, the dialogue proceeds:

- 11Q.—What was done by the mob after he had fallen from the window?
 A.—Joseph was lifted up and placed against the curb of a well.
 12Q.—What did Williams, the commander of the mob order?
 A.—He ordered four men to shoot him.

⁴⁴ Rosenberg, *Custer*, p. 208.

⁴⁵ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp. 90 and 96 n. 60.



In this representation of the assassination, Joseph Smith is shot by the well as uniformed Cathage Greys look on.

13Q.—Did they do so?

A.—Yes; they stood about eight feet from the well, and all fired at once.

14Q.—What was done next?

A.—A man with a bowie knife raised his hand to cut off Joseph's head.

15Q.—What prevented him committing this brutal outrage?

A.—A vivid flash of lightning caused his arm to fall powerless.⁴⁶

Years after the fact N. B. Lundwall was able to gather numerous first- and second-person accounts of individuals claiming to have witnessed or to have known persons who witnessed the miraculous event. Discounting the possibility that they were involved in a conscious forgery, as Daniels may have been, these accounts are excellent examples of the phenomenon that Matti Klinge observed active in Finnish history. Klinge pointed out that Finnish participants in the wars and civil conflicts of the past half century remember those events according to the pattern provided by novelist Väinö Linna's fictionalized account of them. "It seems that the mental picture which many older citizens have today of the history of the first half of our century has been decisively influenced by Väinö Linna's *North Star* trilogy; one's own history comes to mind in relationship to . . . this Finnish model story, this prototype."⁴⁷ Nor was it years in coming,

⁴⁶ *Deseret Sunday School Catechism No. 1: Questions and Answers on the Life and Mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, 1882), p. 51.

⁴⁷ *Bernadotten Ja Lenin Välistä* (Helsinki, 1975), p. 43. This excerpt translated by Professor William A. Wilson, Brigham Young University.



Another artistic representation of the heavenly light that stayed the hand of a man about to mutilate the fallen Joseph Smith.

this synthesis of one's own experience with the structure of the model. Although Lord Raglan argued that "about fifty years after his [the hero's] death is a probable time for myths to be first associated with a historical character," Rosenberg responded that "this is far too long; the legend-making process begins within days, perhaps hours of the event," and he is right.⁴⁸ Mary Lightner remembered that within days of the martyrdom

a number of men came and called us to the door and said, "The Smiths are dead, and they do say a great light appeared when they were killed." I said, "That should prove to you that Joseph was a true Prophet and a man of God." One answered "It proves that the Lord was well pleased with what was done."⁴⁹

Although this recollection was recorded some years after the event, the context in which it was told and complexity of its formulation (the men offer an alternative interpretation) argue against her having anachronistically positioned it in the narrative. The remarkable thing is not merely that the story was spread so soon, but that it was so persuasive as to have convinced even the vehemently anti-Mormon element of the community who then participated in its dissemination. Little wonder, with this kind

⁴⁸ Lord Raglan, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama* (1936; reprint ed., New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 214; Rosenberg, *Custer*, p. 269.

⁴⁹ "Biographical Sketch of Mary Lightner," p. 11.

of corroboration, that the Mormon community should have believed the account and, indeed, continues to believe it.⁵⁰ Raglan simply did not appreciate the vitality of the mythic, the archetypal element in the formulation of historic consciousness. It is not the myth that need fear on account of a contemporaneous memory of the historical event; an accurate memory of the events as they occurred is far more likely to suffer than any mythic formulation of those events as they *should* have occurred.

DEATH OF THE HERO IS AVENGED

Related to the divine intervention by which the hero's body is spared mutilation is the process by which revenge is taken on the enemy. In the case of the "hero as warrior," such as Custer, revenge was a simple matter: white America simply beat the tar out of red America, and the process continued until very recently when social consciousness somewhat turned things around. But in the case of a people who are either unwilling or unable to take revenge themselves, the task falls to divine providence. As the 1882 catechism states:

18Q.—What did the mob do after they had murdered Joseph and Hyrum?

A.—They all fled from Carthage.

19Q.—Why did they thus flee?

A.—Because they feared the just vengeance of the Saints.

20Q.—Did the Saints take revenge on the murderers?

A.—No; they left them in the hands of God, who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."⁵¹

The Christian ethic, despite existential inroads, is essentially otherworldly in its reward system, but not so the folk consciousness in its response to myth. Although simple logic would indicate to the devout Mormon that the only advantage in service rendered the Adversary is that he rewards one in this life, having no power in the life to come, the folkgroup demands some tangible evidence of God's payment *now*. The Puritan response to this demand had very much to do with "election" and prosperity, and the Mormon response to it, in terms of the Joseph Smith myth, has to do with the punishment of the persecutors of the prophet. Having received no justice from the state courts, the Saints watched for

⁵⁰ Of seventy-five persons questioned by the author about the Joseph Smith myth, more than 80 percent of those who had heard the account believed that Joseph was spared mutilation by divine intervention. But of those who had heard and believed the account of the bright light, fewer than 40 percent had heard and/or believed the account of Joseph being martyred at the well. An even higher percentage than had heard of the light had heard and believed accounts of horrible fates befalling the persecutors of the prophet. It should be emphasized that this sampling was of the most cursory nature. A good, thorough, and properly controlled study needs to be done of folk beliefs in this area.

⁵¹ *Sunday School Catechism*, p. 51.

the divine destruction of the wicked, and they saw it. N. B. Lundwall, whose book *Oaks and Hill* dismiss, recorded the fates of those involved in persecuting the Saints and martyring the prophet, fates that range from not having one's grave kept up to having one's eyes eaten out.⁵² The model teaches the structure and the folk establish the lore.

Although the influence of such a mythic pattern has the positive result of reinforcing the values and beliefs of the folk group, Rosenberg pointed out that "the legend of the martyred hero, with its implied call for revenge, sets one people against another; in fact we have seen that this is often its purpose."⁵³ Gentile against Jew, Christian against Infidel, Mormon against Missouri Puke and Illinois Mobocrat. Even in the hymns of the worship service the tradition has survived. William W. Phelps's ever-popular "Praise to the Man" exclaims:

Praise to his memory, he died as a martyr;
Honored and blest be his ever great name!
Long shall his blood, which was shed by assassins,
Plead unto heaven while the earth lauds his fame.⁵⁴

In the original it was even more specific, stating that the "blood, which was shed by assassins" would long "Stain Illinois."⁵⁵ For what does the blood plead? For Lundwall the answer was obvious, as it probably was for many Mormons. But while most were willing to take surrogate satisfaction in the legends of divine retribution surrounding the Joseph Smith myth, one of the most tragic events in Mormon history resulted, at least in part, when a group sought to take actual revenge for Mormon martyrs and suffering on a relatively innocent group of emigrants. The massacre of the Fancher train at Mountain Meadow in southern Utah in 1857, beyond being further, although peripheral, evidence of the vitality of myth in influencing public lives, is one of the relatively few regrettable incidents in the history of a people who exercised remarkable restraint and devoted their enthusiasms to the development of a tradition rich in its mythic possibilities.⁵⁶

⁵² *Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy*, p. 96 n. 60; N. B. Lundwall, ed., *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Author, 1932), pp. 292-358.

⁵³ Rosenberg, *Custer*, p. 225.

⁵⁴ *Hymns: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1966), no. 147.

⁵⁵ *Times and Seasons*, August 1, 1844.

⁵⁶ The best account of this is Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1950).

HERO'S FALL IS TRAGIC/HERO IS HONORED

The result of the process, the creation of this entity we have called the Martyred Hero, is the veneration of the hero. The hero having "given up his life to gain some higher spiritual reward," his followers participate in the ritual of his beatification.⁵⁷ The Mormon Doctrine and Covenants announces that Joseph Smith died "to seal the testimony of this book and the *Book of Mormon*," and continues with the declaration that

3. Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. . . . He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood;

.

6. . . . They [Joseph and Hyrum Smith] lived for Glory; they died for glory; and glory is their eternal reward. From age to age shall their names go down to posterity as gems for the sanctified.⁵⁸

Actually, only the one name, Joseph Smith, has been preserved in the lore of the Mormon people in quite this fashion, but for him the statement is not in the least hyperbolic. If anything, Mormons have been criticized for elevating the memory of Joseph Smith *above* that of the Christ, and while this is not true, he does run a close second, as the Doctrine and Covenants suggests he should. He is, for Mormons, unique: the one man set apart from and above all other men. "None of his successors," Davis Bitton, assistant church historian, has observed, "quite dared to stand in his place. Occasionally, timidly, they put forth revelations on their own, carefully tying them to earlier statements by the prophet-founder."⁵⁹ And so it continues to the present time, with one of the two most recent additions to the Mormon canon being a vision recorded in 1836 by a man who has been dead for more than a century—Joseph Smith, prophet, seer, revelator, and martyred hero of the Mormon church.⁶⁰

Conforming as he does to the martyred hero model that Rosenberg has isolated, Joseph Smith joins an illustrious group that includes the

⁵⁷ Rosenberg, *Custer*, p. 241.

⁵⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 135:1, 3, 6.

⁵⁹ Davis Bitton, "Joseph Smith in the Mormon Folk Memory," p. 27, paper read at the 1975 meeting of the John Whitmer Historical Society.

⁶⁰ The "Vision of the Celestial Kingdom" recorded by Joseph Smith on January 21, 1836, was accepted as "new scripture" at the April 3, 1976, General Conference of the LDS church. Alan Dundes would insist that it was no coincidence that the other and related scripture introduced at this session was received by the founding prophet's namesake, Joseph F. Smith, sixth president of the church (see *Deseret News*, Church News section, April 3, 1976).

names of such as Roland, Gawain, Bjarkamal, Hrolf, Saul, and a score of others; and for Mormons, it should be obvious, his name will be chief among them. The Mormon community may well profit from the study of their founder in his appropriate mythic context. If nothing else, such a consideration may lend new meaning to the tenet that Jesus Christ, the overseer of human activity, is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."⁶¹ Likewise, it may help them to understand why the life of Joseph Smith, adhering even in its pristine historical detail to the archetype established for the hero, has been so prominent in the Mormon memory, while other martyrs, such as John Taylor, Parley Pratt, and David Patten, have been neglected or forgotten. Finally, Mormons have tended to view their tradition in terms of personalities and events rather than types and symbols. This has resulted in the portrayal of their major personalities as flat personifications of abstract virtues and the hagiological apologizing of their history. With the increased importance and objectivity of Mormon history in the past decade, a people accustomed to ignoring the uncomfortable realities of their past have been at the mercy of their historians, whether apologetic or objective, for they have found themselves on the one hand deceived and on the other, all too often, castigated. As a result, both they and their history have suffered. The ability to see traits of their leaders and details of their history as corollary but not fundamental to the veracity of their system and their willingness to recognize their own vitality of faith in their folklore, whether that lore is based on historical incident or on fancy, may yet rescue them from the excesses and errors of the past.

For historians of the Mormon past, especially for collectors and collators of oral history, an awareness of archetypal influences may be one step towards establishing the contamination of data. But more important still, it provides a means of analyzing and linking the fanciful with the factual and may tell us more about the Mormon personality and culture than a sterile analysis of events.⁶²

⁶¹ Hebrews 13:8.

⁶² Reed C. Durham's paper "Is There No Help for the Widow's Son?" delivered as the Presidential Address at the 1974 convention of the Mormon History Association (and printed without the author's permission in *Mormon Miscellaneous*, October 1975, pp. 11-16; my page citation refers to this spurious source) is a good example of a historian's accepting what appears to be a case of diffusion while ignoring archetypal possibilities. As a paper that conducts a useful and at times insightful discussion of similarities existing between Masonry and Mormonism and possible origins of certain Mormon practices and ceremonies, Durham's work is, for the archetypalists, marred by a lack of scholarly reservation. "The similarities between the two ceremonies," Durham wrote, "are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied" (p. 12). But Rosenberg pointed out that even when such relationships are "apparent" they may not be real, and he insisted on a genesis of the Custer legend independent from the "Indo-European oral narrative tradition" to which it bears a marked resemblance. Rosenberg may be wrong in his analysis of the Custer legend, but his case is strong and the

In conclusion, for the folklorist, the mythographer, an examination of the Joseph Smith myth provides an even more valuable opportunity than Rosenberg has recognized in the Custer legend. Here we have an opportunity to study the ways in which historical events develop and are manipulated to fulfill the mythic consciousness. Even in this cursory study we have seen, as Rosenberg did with Custer, that Lord Raglan was wrong in the length of time he assumed was required for legend or myth to develop. But he was also wrong in his assumptions concerning the relationship of myth with history:

It is possible that some of the heroes were real persons, whose actions were recorded, but whose real careers became for some reason swamped by myth.

.....
If, however, we take any really historical person, and make a clear distinction between what history tells us of him and what tradition tells us, we shall find that tradition, far from being supplementary to history, is totally unconnected with it, and that the hero of history and the hero of tradition are really two quite different persons, though they may bear the same name.

.....
The difference between the story of a historical character and that of a hero of tradition is that in the former case we may find myths or fables loosely and as a rule unsuitably tacked on to a record of well-attested fact, while in the latter the story consists of some striking miracles against a background of typical myth.⁶³

Raglan may have assumed that there were no adequately documented examples of the creation of legend or myth, but whatever his assumption, the Joseph Smith myth indicates his conclusions, at least in this instance, to be wrong. The historical events do not become "swamped" in myth so much as they are mythically interpreted; and the tradition does, thereby, supplement the history, or perhaps the history supplements the myth—either way, there is a specific and organic tie. Finally, Raglan ignores the possibility that a historical figure may indeed fulfill his life in terms of an intuited sense of mythic responsibility. As Carl Jung points out, "the psyche contains all the images that have ever given rise to myths, and . . . our unconscious is an acting and suffering subject."⁶⁴

point, I think, well made. Therefore, while it seems obvious enough that some relationship exists between Mormonism and Masonry and while Durham illustrated that the relationship may be more profound than generally has been believed, that relationship may be as subtle as it is obvious; and if diffusion is the more apparent and defensible possibility, archetypal potentialities, nevertheless, should not be discounted.

⁶³ Raglan, *The Hero: A Study*, pp. 134, 205-6, 197-98.

⁶⁴ Jung, "Archetypes," p. 208.

Whether Joseph Smith was acting out some inner drama when he moved to the upper room of the Carthage jail or not, the fact is that the event, by means of its archetypal progression, contributed to the formation of the myth, and that that myth, far from being contrived, is as much dependent on its history as its lore. Indeed, one might question whether it could have power in the lives of the Mormon folk group if there were not this tie, albeit in the past, of common experience, of history.

All of this is, of course, only a beginning, an indication of the investigations that need to be made, the analyses that require our attention. But if Joseph Smith and his *myth* have been slighted by the folklorist in the past, it is hoped that he may now be viewed in the broader context of the contributions that his study may make to an understanding not only of Mormon lore but of the process of myth and legend-making existing throughout the broad range of human experience.



Jessie Evans Smith. Photograph courtesy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Legend of Jessie Evans Smith

BY LINDA W. HARRIS

WHERE DOES A LEGEND BEGIN? For me the legend of Jessie Evans Smith began one morning in 1969, when I visited a friend who worked as a secretary in the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City. It began with the appearance of our heroine. My friend was telling me a Judas joke—a very funny one having to do with the historical feud between the Scots and the English—when an elderly but very flamboyant lady joined our group and proceeded to tell a Judas joke she knew. Her joke wasn't nearly as funny as my friend's but I didn't care in the least; I was captivated by the teller. Before me stood a rather large, benign lady dressed in lavender, including matching eyeshadow, with an enormous

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mauve orchid pinned to her equally ample bosom. She was soon introduced to me as Sister Smith, and I knew her to be the wife of Joseph Fielding Smith who, presumably, would be the next prophet and president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Taking advantage of my speechless state, she informed me that she, too, had a very important job in the building and that if I had time she would like to introduce me to her boss. I had never met President Smith before either, but that's another story, another legend.

For one of my former freshman students, the legend began with the question: "Jesse Evans Smith—who's he?" This was certainly appropriate since most heroes in American and Mormon folklore are men—not women. In her article "Things Walt Disney Never Told Us," Kay Stone bemoans the lack of scholarly attention given to folktale heroines, and, when the attention is given, bemoans the lack of spirit and character allowed them.¹ Roger D. Abrahams, in "Some Varieties of Heroes in America," defines the hero in such a way as to completely exclude his female counterpart. He notes that "the actions we consider heroic reflect a view of life which is based upon contest values and a social hierarchy built on the model of a male-centered family."² Richard M. Dorson tells us that "when a close-knit group of people spins tales and ballads about a character celebrated in their locality or occupation, a true hero of the folk comes into existence."³ He then goes on to discuss exclusively the male exploits of "four shaggy heroes." Included in these exploits are all too brief glimpses of Davy Crockett's sweethearts who, though lightly drawn, are no passive sleeping beauties, but women equal in stamina and cunning to their male counterparts. They are different—and so is Jessie Evans Smith.

I first began considering the question of Jessie Evans Smith's unique position among LDS women when asked if I knew the name of the wife of Spencer W. Kimball, the present prophet of the church. Shamefully I shook my head and realized that I could name only the wives of four presidents, past and present. And the only one I knew very much about was Jessie Evans Smith. I then questioned several of my friends to see if they were as ignorant as I and found us all to be in the same boat—they too knew the names of two or three wives, one invariably being

¹ Kay Stone, "Things Walt Disney Never Told Us," *Journal of American Folklore* 88 (1975): 42-50.

² Roger D. Abrahams, "Some Varieties of Heroes in America," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 3 (1966): 341.

³ Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 199.

Jessie Evans Smith. My next question, of course, had to be—why Jessie? What was so remarkable about her that people would perpetuate her memory in legend?

As I attempted to answer this question, I began to collect Jessie Evans Smith stories and to examine those already on file in the Brigham Young University Folklore Archive.⁴ In this paper I shall attempt to explain why these stories have caught and continue to hold the public fancy.

I should point out first that the Jessie Evans Smith I am concerned with is the legendary Jessie Evans Smith rather than the historical Mrs. Smith, though legend and history may at times blur together. Many of the stories currently in oral circulation certainly have root in historical events, but through the process of oral transmission, collective remembering and communal reshaping, they have come to reflect not actual historical reality but what we have come to believe that reality was. I hope Jessie will forgive me for using her legend to show how others saw in her what they wanted to see.

Concerning the development of legends, Richard M. Dorson points out that legends begin when events in the lives of eccentric or otherwise noteworthy people are remembered by the folk and are exaggerated and embellished by them as stories of the events circulate from person to person. Once a character has gained notoriety in this manner, then stories and anecdotes that float from place to place but belong really to no particular time or place are attached to the cycle, and a full-blown legendary hero is born. In Mormon lore J. Golden Kimball best illustrates both these processes. A church authority who gained notoriety for his unorthodox behavior and for his colorful language, he is now the subject of many stories that have not originated among the Mormons. Consider, for example, the story of the Catholic priest who finds himself in a restaurant on a Friday. At the point of ordering his meal, he asks the waiter if they have any shark on the menu. They haven't so he asks for whale. Discovering that they have no whale either, the priest says that he had better have steak then. As he watches the waiter place his order, the priest murmurs that the Holy Father has heard him ask for fish.⁵ In the case of J. Golden Kimball, the story goes like this:

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, subsequent references to items of folklore will give the collector and year of collection. All items used in this paper, including background and informant data, are on file in the Brigham Young University Folklore Archive, c/o English Department.

⁵ Linda Harris, 1976.

J. Golden was downtown at the Rotisserie eating dinner one day with a fairly large group of friends, mostly lawyers, and he was seated at the end of the table, and the waiter came around to take his order first. As you know, being a good Mormon he was not supposed to drink tea or coffee, but he did like his coffee. Well, he ordered his dinner and the waiter wrote it down, and then he said, "What will you drink?"

Brother Golden in a very weak voice said, "Water."

And the fellow sitting next to him touched the waiter and said, "Oh, bring him coffee. He likes coffee."

So the waiter wrote it down and went on around the table. Brother Golden didn't say anything until the waiter got 'way down at the other end of the table, and then he said: "The Lord heard me say 'water.'"⁴

Though a number of stories told about Jessie Evans Smith are also apocryphal, many of them, as already noted, have some basis in fact. We are, therefore, still in the first stage of legend formation: the elaboration and embellishment of actual events. In studying those particular events that are remembered and circulated orally we may not learn a great deal about Jessie Evans Smith, but we may learn something of ourselves and something perhaps of the process of legend formation itself.

In *Folk Legends of Japan*, Richard M. Dorson reminds us that the legend is a true story to those who first remember it and then pass it on. He hastens to add that because the ordinary events of everyday life are seldom worthy of retention, "the legend is further distinguished by describing an extraordinary event. In some way the incident at its core contains noteworthy, remarkable, astonishing, or otherwise memorable aspects."⁵ What we must remember, however, is that what to one group may seem extraordinary will to another appear quite commonplace. Thus as we discover what a people deems worthy of remembering we will have moved a little closer to understanding fundamental needs of that people.

From the countless "ordinary events" in the life of Jessie Evans Smith, then, why have we chosen to remember what we have? The answer seems to be that because, as a group, we share particular tensions as well as beliefs, we have selectively remembered and transmitted through traditional patterns those remarkable or astonishing events that release our tensions and strengthen our beliefs. For instance, two faculty members at Brigham Young University, both returned missionaries, remember and tell of a mission visit by President and Sister Smith:

⁴ Thomas E. Cheney, *The Golden Legacy: A Folk History of J. Golden Kimball* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973), pp. 43-44.

⁵ Richard M. Dorson, *Folk Legends of Japan* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1963), p. 18.

We were all in the dining room waiting for President Smith to come in. After a while all of us, including Sister Smith, became rather impatient. Finally Sister Smith opened the door and yelled out: "Joe, come on!" Immediately President Smith shuffled into the room.⁸

One informant tells the story as a personal experience since he was among the missionaries waiting impatiently for dinner to begin. The other tells it as he heard it in oral circulation in the Swiss Mission. From the numerous events that occurred during the Smiths' visit to this mission both remember and tell this particular tale because it is representative of the kind of person they believe, or want, Jessie Evans Smith to be. Through her they are able to see a more "approachable" authority figure.

In another instance, a number of people claim that Jessie Evans was in her "late forties or early fifties" when she married Joseph Fielding Smith. She was in fact only thirty-six. These people seem to remember and pass on this "misinformation" for two major reasons. First of all, by placing Jessie outside the age of childbearing they avoid having to grapple with the horrendous problem of childless mothers in Israel, particularly one who is wife to the prophet. Secondly, older, single women are reassured that perhaps their time, too, will come. In the telling of these and other stories, we then have a clear example of the dichotomy between the real, three dimensional Jessie Evans Smith and the legendary or representative Jessie Evans—a projection of ourselves. In other words we have chosen to remember, sometimes incorrectly, and to embellish only those events in Jessie Evans Smith's life that reflect our own attitudes and meet our own needs.

In the stories told about her, Jessie Evans Smith most often serves as an exponent of women's rights and as a foil to her authoritarian husband, humanizing him in such a way as to endear both of them to us. Minor themes serve only to elaborate on and reinforce these two major traits of character.

From a feminist point of view, Jessie Evans Smith is one of the few women in church history who not only survives difficulty but emerges victorious. Lucy Mack Smith, Eliza R. Snow, Mary Fielding, and many other faithful Latter-day Saint women underwent great trials, and we deem them heroines for their endurance. We admire them for their sufferance of the indignities of pioneer life, for their struggling to gain intellectual freedom, and for their great legacy of testimony. Jessie Evans

⁸ Linda Harris, 1975.

Smith is lauded for similar attributes but also for her nonconformity. One collector of Jessie Evans stories comments:

I've learned that there is some truth to the label "Utah Mormons"—these seem to be the worst offenders of the conformity crisis. Many of them are afraid to think for themselves—afraid that this will be frowned upon by church leaders. So they conform, and as they conform they begin to look down on Mormons who are not natives of what they smugly call, Utah, Zion. . . . All Mormons are alike I said. Then I learned about Aunt Jessie.

The humor of Jessie Evans Smith, the way she seemed to always thwart the sobriety of her husband, her unabashed spontaneity—these were the things which restored my faith. . . .⁹

Consider, for example, the time when the Smiths' home was invaded by reporters and cameramen wanting to interview Jessie Evans. As one cameraman tried to take a picture of her she screamed, "No, you can't take my picture. I'm not wearing my Bible dress." When the reporters asked her what a Bible dress was, she smiled—she'd been waiting for them to ask. She just patted her ample bosom and said airily, "A Bible dress—you know—low and behold."¹⁰

I personally laugh at this story each time I either hear or read it, and then I feel it necessary to reprimand myself for doing so. Not because of Jessie's nonconformity, but because I enjoy a story concerning an authority figure wearing an immodest dress. Why, then, do I continue to tell it? In "Some Varieties of Heroes in America," Roger Abrahams notes that "hero stories are a depiction, a projection of values in story form." He continues:

As projections, these stories reflect the values of the culture in two ways: as a guide for future action in real life and as an expression of dream-life, of wish-fulfillment.

Concerning his latter point Abrahams adds:

In many groups there is a trickster hero who expends much of his energy in anti-social or anti-authoritarian activity. Even when this results in benefits to the group, his actions cannot be interpreted as providing a model for future conduct. He is a projection of desires generally thwarted by society. His celebrated deeds function as an approved steam-valve for the group; he is allowed to perform in this basically childish way so that the group may vicariously live his adventures without actually acting on his impulses. To encourage such action would be to place the existence of the group in jeopardy.¹¹

⁹ Kathy Helms, 1971.

¹⁰ Kathy Helms, 1971.

¹¹ Abrahams, "Some Varieties of Heroes in America," pp. 341–42.

So although I am a throat-to-toe Mormon as far as my dress standards go, I am relieved of the pressures of being so when confronted with the idea of a prophet's wife wearing a plunging neckline. As William A. Wilson has pointed out, Abrahams's dictum means that stories told about characters like J. Golden Kimball or Jessie Evans Smith

provide us the pleasure of sin without the need of suffering the consequences. More seriously . . . they make it easier for us to live with societal pressures that inhibit our natural inclinations and might otherwise be the undoing of both ourselves and our society.¹²

It is significant to me that Jessie Evans Smith has become a folk heroine at a time when women are beginning, en masse, to evaluate their standing in society and make demands not just for equality but for a sense of partnership.

It is this idea of partnership that permeates the Joseph Fielding/Jessie Evans duo, reinforcing Jessie's role as a representative of women's rights. The following related stories illustrate this point. The first account comes from that mass of stories told about women drivers:

The Smiths have this little white Valiant, but President Smith can't drive so Aunt Jessie drives it to church every week and they park right out front—after church President Smith always helps Aunt Jessie in the car. Anyway, after she's all settled in, he gets in and rolls down the window and yells at all the little kids to get out of the way. "Watch out, watch out, Woman driver, woman driver!"¹³

There is nothing unusual in this story, but the second example shows a striking difference. The tale begins the same way, but once Jessie is settled in the car, she shakes her fist out of the window and screams at the little kids to get out of the way. She says: "Clear the road! Clear the road! Woman driver, woman driver!"¹⁴ Another story shows her "shoving" the prophet into the car and then turning to the crowd to wave and smile at them.¹⁵ This is certainly a very different picture from the niceties of etiquette ordinarily demanded by the first ladies of the church. But then, as we have seen, the legendary Jessie Evans Smith is no ordinary woman, as the following story further illustrates:

President Smith was giving a talk at a church meeting. He was really laying it on the line, calling the people to repentance and exhorting

¹² William A. Wilson, "The Paradox of Mormon Folklore," in *Essays on the American West, 1974-75*, ed. Thomas G. Alexander, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History, no. 6 (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), p. 141.

¹³ Kathy Helms, 1971.

¹⁴ Kathy Helms, 1971.

¹⁵ Marsha Barney, 1975.

them to prepare for the second coming of Christ because it was nigh at hand. The time was running out and Sister Smith was supposed to sing and it looked like she wouldn't be able to so she stood up and said, "Joseph, just tell them when He's coming." And President Smith soon closed and Sister Smith did her song.¹⁶

It becomes clearer than ever that in stories like these we see a woman who has evaluated her place and recognizes both the male and female right to make fun of it. Michael Owen Jones has stated that "if a person stands out from his fellows, or performs a task better than his colleagues, he can penetrate the popular consciousness and achieve at least temporary notoriety."¹⁷ There is no doubt in my mind that Jessie Evans Smith has done at least that.

As we move from these stories to those illustrating Jessie Evans Smith's role as foil to her seemingly austere husband, we find still clearer evidence that the stories survive not only because they are delightful and because Jessie was a charming person whose memory deserves being kept alive, but also because they reflect and help meet deeply felt needs—because they make those who preside over us seem a little less awesome and because they make us feel better about ourselves.

Those who knew and loved Joseph Fielding Smith may not enjoy seeing him characterized as straight-laced or stern, but that is how the majority of my informants visualized him, just as they depicted Jessie as a "mellowing" and "humanizing" force in his life and, in consequence, a source of encouragement and hope for themselves. It has been noted that "although Jessie Evans Smith was apparently slave to very few social inhibitions, no one could say she lacked in fulfilling her duties as a prophet's wife."¹⁸ In other words, though her behavior was frequently unorthodox—at times irreverent—there was never any doubt about her loyalty to the church and about the security of her position in the kingdom. She thus provides us with a source of encouragement and hope as we struggle to overcome our weaknesses in adhering strictly to the commandments of God.

Perhaps the most popular cycle of Jessie Evans Smith stories has to do with her having the last word over her prophet-husband. For example:

Apparently Joseph Fielding Smith had just delivered a scathing speech on immodest women, women who don't know their "place," etc. While the

¹⁶ Sondra Peacock, 1975.

¹⁷ Michael Owen Jones, "PC+CB+SD (R+I+E)=Hero," p. 2. Copy of paper in the possession of William A. Wilson, BYU Folklore Archive.

¹⁸ Sherri Mills, 1975. This notion has been repeated by several informants.

audience was still in shock over Joseph's message, Jessie Evans Smith took the stand and said: "You know, there's an indestructible iron plaque on my kitchen wall that I thoroughly cherish. It says "The opinions expressed by the head of the house are not necessarily those of the management." ¹⁹

One time President Smith gave a strong talk on how the brethren should preside in the home and not their wives. Afterwards Sister Smith got up and said how much she agreed with her husband's remarks, adding, however, that although President Smith might preside in their home, she conducted. ²⁰

President Smith was well known for his views on makeup and so apparently was Sister Smith for hers. The following is a typical example of a familiar story:

One day President Smith gave a talk in conference and for his subject he chose being in the world and not of the world. Eventually he got onto the subject of loose women and how to spot them. One of his criteria of a loose woman was that she wore too much makeup. "Let this be a warning to you women: don't wear too much makeup," he said sternly. And all the while there sat Aunt Jessie behind him in the choir section, smiling and waving at everyone—with her lipstick on three inches thick. ²¹

I suspect that, while generally appealing, these stories will particularly endear Jessie Evans Smith to the women of the church as they view a fellow defender of their rights thwarting at least the sombre tone of her husband's admonitions for female subservience in the home. The next group of stories tend to broaden Jessie's influence as they depict her no longer as direct foil to Joseph Fielding Smith, but as a mellowing influence. Consider, for instance, the time when Jessie Evans Smith accompanied her husband to a church meeting:

It was President Smith's turn to address the congregation and he stood up and gave a beautiful talk on the virtues of women and motherhood in general, which was really a change from what was expected. Just before everyone left to go home, one of the sisters turned to Jessie Evans and complimented her on her husband's lovely talk. "Oh," said Jessie Evans, "it was only because he's on my payroll." ²²

Another time the Smiths are confronted by a group of students:

We were on our way to the elevator when the door opened and out came President and Sister Smith. We just stood there with our mouths open, staring at him and didn't say anything. President Smith kind of walked around our group, kind of looking at the ground like he didn't even see us.

¹⁹ Paula Hytrek, 1975.

²⁰ Linda Harris, 1975.

²¹ Kathy Helms, 1971.

²² Paula Hytrek, 1975.

Jessie Evans smiled and nodded at us and said, "Daddy, come back here, these kids want to talk to you for a while." So he turned around and came back and laughed and joked with us for five or six minutes. My friend was chewing some gum, and President Smith frowned and asked him if he was chewing tobacco. The guy just turned all red and sort of stammered, "No, sir, it's Juicy Fruit."²³

As we evaluate these stories and analyze Jessie Evans Smith's role as a gentling influence in her husband's life, we are made to feel that through her intervention salvation might also be within our own reach. Because Jessie embodies so many "human" qualities she helps us forget our preconceptions and inhibitions concerning authority figures and so relax in their presence. A returned missionary reports that one time President Smith was to be a speaker at a mission conference. The missionaries were nervous because of Joseph Fielding Smith's reputation for speaking on hellfire and damnation. As President Smith was talking he got the sniffles. He carried on regardless until Jessie leaned forward and told him to wipe his nose. Apparently the audience was caught off guard and a roar of laughter rose from the crowd of once nervous missionaries. It is not surprising that this informant felt the story showed that the "brethren are human."²⁴ Upon closer examination, however, perhaps President Smith seems human here because he is treated like a human being, more like a husband than like a general authority. If so, we who are also human, find additional hope for our own acceptance in the kingdom. The following story not only shows President Smith being treated like a human being, but reacting like any other person to boot.

It seems that Jessie Evans and President Smith were touring in Europe right after the war. In one city Sister Smith had been walking along window shopping with President Smith and some other general authorities when something caught her eye in a shop across the road. She crossed the street to look, then motioned Brother Smith to come and look too, but she couldn't get his attention. After calling and waving without success she finally picked up the pair of silk stockings that had attracted her, let out a shrill whistle and waving the hose in the air yelled, "Hey, Joe, come over

²³ Eric Nelson, 1975. This account is told as a firsthand experience and as such would not, until recently, have been considered folklore. However, there is currently a trend to redefine the legend in terms of its genesis. In "Processes of Legend Formation," 4, *International Congress* (Athens, 1965), pp. 77-87, Linda Dégh comments that in a legend-telling session when one story is concluded "another is started immediately, by someone who had a like experience or knowledge." She later adds that "it is all the same whether it is in the first person, which gives the impression of having experienced the event, or whether it happened to a relative or a friend. . . ." In the case of this particular account we are given more than an impression of its firsthand nature. It is stated as fact and as such illustrates the kinds of stories that are remembered, told and retold—the kinds of stories that become part of a legend cycle.

²⁴ Thomas Burke, 1974.



President Joseph Fielding Smith and Jessie Evans Smith. Photograph courtesy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

here." Needless to say many heads turned, and the embarrassed Brother Smith rushed across the street to quiet his wife.²⁵

Perhaps the story for which we have the most variants is that of the "do-it." I've seen it enacted before my eyes as well as hearing it time and time again—enough times that I believe it to be a routine worked out between the Smiths for the enjoyment of all. A "do-it" evidently occurred

almost every time the Smiths were invited to address young people:

One time at a meeting Sister Smith wanted her husband to sing a duet with her. He tried to get out of it, but finally submitted, saying, "When my wife says 'duet' what she really means is *do it*."²⁶

It has been claimed that if someone else hadn't invited Sister Smith to sing, President Smith would have done so, even if it meant submitting to a "do-it." And because of it, we become allies with a seemingly stern prophet of God.

Through these stories perpetuated by the folk, then, we get a very different picture of Joseph Fielding Smith. Before he became president of the LDS church a great many of its members considered Joseph Fielding Smith to be a second Jeremiah, a voice of doom prophesying Judah's (Zion's) downfall should the people fail to repent. One student collector was told that a secret society had been formed to prevent Joseph Fielding Smith from becoming president and prophet of the church.²⁷ It is therefore not surprising that comments like the following are rampant.

After what I had learned about President and Sister Smith I guess I'll never see them in my mind's eye the same again. From the straight laced, stern, but respected prophet who never seemed to smile, to the human being. Truly Sister Smith must have been a wonderful woman and just what President Smith needed to round him out.²⁸

I have come to enjoy the Jessie Evans Smith stories partly because through Jessie's intervention Joseph Fielding Smith is revealed as a

²⁵ Chris Caffee, 1974.

²⁶ Ann Barrott, 1975.

²⁷ Allen McCarter, 1975.

²⁸ Raymond Madsen, 1975.

human being as well as God's mouthpiece and partly because I see a woman who has known this all along and can handle both aspects with great aplomb. But whether these reasons will be representative enough to allow her legend to grow and prosper remains to be seen.

In the case of J. Golden Kimball, who has been dead for almost thirty-eight years, there is no cause for doubt. He has become a full-blown folk hero. However, Jessie Evans Smith has been dead for not quite five years, and it is still too early to know if she, like J. Golden, will continue to live in legend. Nathaniel Hawthorne has given us a good traditional definition of legend formation through his fictional character Septimus Felton, who says:

Yes, I shall like to hear the legend, if it is a genuine one that has been adopted into the popular belief, and came down in chimney corners with the smoke and soot that gathers there; and incruited over with humanity, by passing from one homely mind to another. Then, such stories get to be true, in a certain sense, and indeed in that sense may be called true throughout, for the very nucleus, the fiction in them, seems to have come out of the heart of man in a way that cannot be imitated of malice aforethought. Nobody can make a tradition; it takes a century to make it.²⁹

I would certainly not quarrel with Hawthorne's assertion that, no matter how a story begins, it can become significant to those who hear it, allow it to influence their lives and then, believing it to be true, transmit it to others. However, it takes people—the folk—to make a tradition, not a century. Bruce Rosenberg convincingly makes this point in his work *Custer and the Epic of Defeat* when he refutes Lord Raglan's theory that a gestation period of fifty years should follow a hero's death before he becomes a legend. Rosenberg claims that this is "far too long; the legend-making process begins within days, perhaps hours of the event."³⁰ I would argue that this is far too long; the legend-making process can begin long before death claims the hero—it begins when the folk will it to begin.

Anecdotes about Jessie Evans Smith were already being circulated and added upon in her own lifetime; and in her own lifetime floating stories were already being attached to these anecdotes. For example, in the 1930s a story circulated about how Rudger Clawson was trying "with

²⁹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Septimus Felton* in *Hawthorne's Works*, vol. 4 (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1883), p. 326.

³⁰ Bruce A. Rosenberg, *Custer and the Epic of Defeat* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974), p. 269.

all his strength" to "outlive Heber" and so take President Heber J. Grant's position as prophet of the church.³¹ In the 1960s before President David O. McKay died, the same story was attached to Jessie Evans Smith:

Jessie Evans Smith used to get her husband out of bed each morning and say: "All right, Joseph, it's time for our exercises. Ready. One, two, three. Outlive David O. Outlive David O."³²

In a softened version of this story, a woman was overheard to say at a parade in Salt Lake in 1965 as Joseph Fielding Smith was being driven past:

Aunt Jessie feeds Uncle Joseph lots of vitamins and gets him to do his exercises every day so that he can live long enough to become prophet.³³

Finally, following President McKay's death, a riddle-joke developed about Jessie and President McKay's personal secretary, Clare Middlemiss:

Have you heard that Jessie Evans Smith is now President instead of Clare Middlemiss?³⁴

A number of the jokes growing out of the era of miniskirts and bare bottoms have also been attached to the Jessie Evans Smith cycle. In some of these she is reported to have stated that "mini skirts come in all thighses."³⁵ She is also reported as saying that "people worry about mini skirts. . . . But I'm not worried. All I have to say is the end is in sight."³⁶

Hopefully the end is not in sight for the legend of Jessie Evans Smith. But should her legend die aborning we have at least been able to see and understand something of its attempted beginning—a privilege denied us in the case of J. Golden Kimball. In an essay entitled "The Genesis of Toby, A Folk Hero of the American Theater," Jere C. Mickel comments that "the very nature of folklore precludes any possibility of watching the process of its development."³⁷ Most folklorists have not watched this process, I suspect, not because the notion of folklore precludes it but because they have not looked, because they have turned their attention

³¹ Richard Ellsworth, 1976.

³² Wilson, "The Paradox of Mormon Folklore," p. 14.

³³ Linda Harris, 1975.

³⁴ William A. Wilson, 1971.

³⁵ Kathy Helms, 1971.

³⁶ Randy Taylor, 1975.

³⁷ Jere C. Mickel, "The Genesis of Toby, A Folk Hero of the American Theater," *Journal of American Folklore* 80 (1967): 334.

instead to those characters who have already achieved legendary status. But because Jessie Evans Smith gained notoriety during our lifetime and because it is we who have told her stories—exaggerating, embellishing, and adding to them—we can, if we will look, not only witness the beginning of a legend but also understand our role in its formation. And while we may not learn much of the flesh-and-blood Jessie Evans Smith, we should be able to see how our desires for a heroine among a world of heroes, and for a church leader who is warm and human have caused us to select and shape the stories in the Jessie Evans cycle. In other words, if folklore is a mirror for culture, what we will find in the Jessie Evans Smith stories is not an image of Mrs. Smith but of ourselves. An examination of her legend, a process taking us from fact to fiction, as it were, assures us that this is so.

As I try to summarize Jessie Evans Smith's role as folk heroine I am reminded of a story not linked with her at all but one that parallels what we believe she stands for. I heard this story several years ago in my home ward in London. It was told by a Relief Society lady during a sacrament program honoring the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood:

Before any spirits left God's presence to live on earth, Heavenly Father called a special meeting and invited all the girl spirits to attend. As soon as they were all assembled the doors were locked and all the boy spirits could do was eavesdrop. As they listened they heard Heavenly Father tell the girl spirits about the joys of motherhood. What a wonderful blessing it would be for them to bring his spirit children into the world. He carried on in this vein for several minutes until it became very apparent that there were others listening. As sniffles and sobs broke out, Heavenly Father opened the doors and admitted the weeping boy spirits. Taking pity on them he told them that to compensate for their never being able to experience the joys of motherhood, he would give them the priesthood.³⁸

Perhaps Jessie Evans would have enjoyed this story as much as anyone. Although she never did have children of her own and so was not able to experience all the joys of motherhood and although she did not, of course, hold the priesthood, she was able to enter into a partnership both as wife of the prophet and as a mother to his children. She emerged victorious. As a legendary heroine, Jessie Evans Smith provides us with an assurance that even within the framework of our beliefs, we too can climb out of the rut of conformity.



Bishop's General Storehouse in Salt Lake City. Utah State Historical Society photograph by Charles R. Savage.

The Great and Dreadful Day: Mormon Folklore of the Apocalypse

BY SUSAN PETERSON

IN A RECENT DISCUSSION of folk legends, Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi stated:

The legend remains one of the most characteristic and expressive folklore products of contemporary rural and industrial society. It is a sensitive and immediate indicator of social conditions within small groups of society.¹

If this statement is valid, then one of the best ways to learn what is going on in the minds of the Mormon people, to understand their subtle desires, their attitudes, and their tensions, is to look at their legends, at the stories they are currently telling, and at the beliefs that lie behind them. In

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¹ Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, "The Dialectics of the Legend," *Folklore Preprint Series* 1:6 (1973), p. 48.

Mormon lore one of the most interesting cycles of stories—and certainly one that reveals contemporary attitudes and stresses—is that relating to the apocalypse: to the Second Coming of Christ and to the end of the world.

Many of the stories in this cycle simply reflect a traditional Christian concern with events surrounding the Second Coming, but a number of them express tensions that show fundamental concerns of the Mormon people. The stories express not only the tensions Mormons share with other members of the modern community but also those that arise from a partial alienation from that community. In addition, they express tensions that arise from the people's desire to cling to their faith and to have that faith substantiated by the coming to pass of events so long prophesied. Thus, the stories reveal a curious combination of faith and doubt: faith because of the tenaciousness with which the lore clings to the sometimes-official and sometimes-apocryphal prophecies; and doubt because of the need to justify the prophecies and the desire to indulge in speculation about them.

The strong Mormon focus on the end of the world is not a new one. Members of the church inherit a Judeo-Christian concern with the apocalypse that began several thousand years ago. In the Old Testament the undoing of the world is a major theme. Isaiah, for example, like many of the old visionaries of Israel, makes some devastating pronouncements in warning of the end:

Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction for the Almighty.

Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt. . . .

Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. . . .

Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger (Isaiah 13:6-13).

The New Testament continues this same theme. In Matthew's account of the Lord's life, Christ answers the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" with a lengthy description of desolation, disease, wickedness, wars, the darkening of the sun, and the falling of the stars, and concludes, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24: 3, 33). In Revelation, the Apostle John defines the devastation that

should accompany the apocalypse with his vivid descriptions of beasts that destroy righteousness, angels that wait to pour out "vials of wrath" on the earth, wars that consume Jerusalem, and men who "shall seek death . . . and desire to die" (Revelation 9:6).

When Joseph Smith assumed the role of the Mormon prophet in the nineteenth century, he reinforced this traditional focus. His revelations reiterate that "the end is near, even at the doors." Latter-day Saint prophets since his time have continued in this same vein, expounding on the original prophecies, making them more explicit, pinpointing those that have already been fulfilled, and urging the Saints to prepare for their continued fulfillment. Joseph Fielding Smith, an apostle and later president of the church, gave a series of lectures in 1942 which he called "Signs of the Times" and which he later published as a book. In a chapter entitled "The Great and Dreadful Day," he asserted:

Before the end shall come however, there will yet be "great tribulation among the children of men." To those who have faith in the prophetic warnings regarding the last days, it is apparent that the Lord is hastening his work in its time. It is also clear to the Latter-day Saints who pay attention to these things, that the words of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith are rapidly being fulfilled. The greater part of the first half of the twentieth century has been one of war, bloodshed, calamity and destruction, such as the world has never witnessed before, but these are but the beginning of sorrow and tribulation which have been predicted to come upon the world for its wickedness and rebellion.²

Today the tempo of the church is faster and the sense of urgency greater than ever before. In a recent church conference, for example, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson stated:

The great and dreadful day of the Lord is near at hand. In preparation for this great event and as a means of escaping the impending judgments, inspired messengers have gone, and are now going, for the last time to the nations of the earth carrying this testimony and warning.³

To impress upon the Saints the seriousness of their responsibilities in these "last days," to urge them to obey the commandments, and to help them complete all their necessary, and sometimes mundane, jobs such as genealogical research, home teaching, missionary work, and welfare and service projects, the leaders of the church urge the members to act by reminding them that there is not much time left. It is not surprising,

² Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Signs of the Times: A Series of Discussions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1952), p. 201.

³ Ezra Taft Benson, "A Message to the World," *Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, May 1975, p. 34.

then, that the culture is filled with an air of expectancy. The Saints are waiting for the long-expected events to transpire soon and undo the world.

But this air of expectation seems to touch a chord of speculation among the members and produces, along with greater activity, a vein of unofficial prophecy that attempts to piece ancient and modern apocalyptic predictions together and fit them into current social and political patterns. The result is an unofficial literature that defines for the members just how the ancient prophecies will come to pass. The apocryphal White Horse Prophecy, for example, is part of this literature. Written thirty years after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, it is supposed to be a recounting of one of his revelations. It defines the future progress of the political world in terms of scriptural prediction, pinpointing the course of Western European and Russian involvement, the future of the Catholic and Protestant churches, and the place of the Intermountain West in the conflicts that are supposed to ensue. The LDS church has taken a strong stand against this prophecy and has officially refuted its authenticity.⁴

The Horse Shoe Prophecy is another piece of unofficial literature about the end of the world. It is an account which reports that President John Taylor had a vision in which he saw a day of great warfare and trouble among the Saints and blood running down the gutters of the streets of Salt Lake City. This prediction, too, was written after the fact (in 1951), and in 1970 it, too, was denounced by the church.⁵ In spite of the official disapproval, books that use these prophecies for documentation and attempt a similar kind of scriptural-political correlation are still being written and published.⁶

A somewhat different kind of prophecy was made by Bishop John H. Koyle in Spanish Fork, Utah, in the early 1900s. He, as had others, predicted events leading up to the end of the world, but he went on to claim that a mine located in Spanish Fork Canyon was full of gold and would come to light and produce enough to sustain the Saints during the famine of the last days. Many Mormons believed Bishop Koyle's story and invested in stock in the Dream Mine. A small-scale furor was created among the Saints when Koyle and some of his followers were cut off

⁴ See statement by Joseph F. Smith in *Improvement Era*, December 1918, pp. 105-6.

⁵ The First Presidency initially addressed the issue in a letter (March 30, 1970) mailed to stake presidents, mission presidents, and bishops. The letter was reprinted in the *Church News*, *Deseret News*, April 4, 1970.

⁶ These include such books as Duane S. Crowther's *Prophecy: Key to the Future* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962) and Nels B. Lundwall, *Inspired Prophetic Warnings* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1945).

from the church and their predictions disclaimed by the church leadership.⁷

From these unofficial predictions and from the official traditional focus on the last days has developed a body of Mormon apocalyptic folklore. In Sunday School classes, in late night talk sessions, in discussions between friends, and anywhere and anytime the subject of the Second Coming arises, this end-of-the-world lore circulates freely among members of the church.

William A. Wilson has suggested that as folklore circulates within the group, it is shaped and changed to reflect the concerns of the group and to communicate the predispositions of its members. "Whatever the source," Wilson asserts, "the stories become folklore when they are taken over by the people and reshaped as they are passed from person to person."⁸ In the transmission of last-day folklore, whether from scriptural and official sources, from apocryphal accounts, or from a combination of both, the stories are gradually adjusted to express the needs and desires of the Mormon folk. The lore may or may not be factually true, but as Wilson points out, it is psychologically true because it communicates very real needs and touches on very real problems.⁹ The plethora of apocalyptic folklore in Mormon culture, then, may not reveal much about how the world will actually end, but it can reveal a great deal about the people who create it.

As noted above, much of this apocalyptic folklore clearly reveals that Mormon culture is simply part of Western culture and that Mormons share with others common tensions and fears. The cold war, the increasing power of technology, rampant pollution, serious civil disruption, and international conflict are problems of the entire Western world. Faced with these problems, many Mormons tend to believe that "the great and dreadful day" preceding the Second Coming is indeed at hand. Though most of them get up, go to work, buy new cars, and take vacations with a seeming indifference to world crises, their apprehensions about the end of the world are clearly manifested in the stories they tell each other. In these stories they convert current political and social problems into specific signs and specific catalysts of the long-predicted

⁷ See Joe Stanley Graham's master's thesis, "The Dream Mine: A Study in Mormon Folklore" (Brigham Young University, 1970).

⁸ William A. Wilson, "The Paradox of Mormon Folklore," in *Essays on the American West, 1974-75*, ed. Thomas G. Alexander, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History, no. 6 (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), p. 129.

⁹ Ibid.

end. For example, the scripture that predicts that "before the day of the Lord shall come . . . the moon [shall] be turned to blood" (Doctrine and Covenants 45:42), is accounted for in many different ways in the stories of the folk. The moon turns to blood because the Russians and Americans are there fighting;¹⁰ the pollution in the air and radiation from atomic bombs on earth change the atmosphere and make the moon appear red;¹¹ and missiles shot from the moon cause bloodshed.¹²

In a similar way the reality of constantly threatening war is used to explain how many of the prophecies will be fulfilled. One item tells how the earth will be cleansed by fire:

It has been prophesied that in the last days the earth will be cleansed by fire. This is going to happen because there is going to be a third world war. There is going to be a huge nuclear blast that will cause the fire.¹³

Other items explain the scriptural prediction of "nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom" in terms of current political situations. The Communists will conquer the entire free world and make war on the United States. The United States will enter a final war between Israel and Russia and save Israel, and the Chinese will invade the West Coast and get as far as the Sierra Nevadas.¹⁴

Many stories also attribute the predicted famine and pestilences to current national problems. Trucking strikes and other breakdowns in society will cause a famine.¹⁵ Violence will take over society; every family will need a gun to protect itself; people will steal from everyone else; no woman will be safe from rape; and mothers will kill their children and drink their blood.¹⁶

Although lore such as this tends often to unite Mormons with Christians who share a common apocalyptic vision, it at times isolates church members from the rest of the Christian community. Considered a strange and dangerous sect and, in its early years, driven from area to area by fellow Christians, the church today has not entirely lost its sense of isolation and persecution. For example, one folk account states that as

¹⁰ Collected by Wayne Turley in 1970. Unless otherwise noted, subsequent references to items of folklore will give the collector and year of collection. All items used in this paper, including background and informant data, are on file in the Brigham Young University Folklore Archive, c/o English Department.

¹¹ Lyn Dearden, 1975.

¹² Margie Sorenson, 1975.

¹³ Hal Draney, 1975.

¹⁴ Wayne Turley, 1975.

¹⁵ Janet Christoffersen, 1975.

¹⁶ Wayne Turley, 1975.

the end approaches the Saints will be hated and persecuted and will have to go back to Missouri in the same way they came to Utah, on foot and in handcarts.¹⁷

End-of-the-world stories about Blacks and Mormons reinforce this sense of isolation. Blacks are accepted into membership in the Mormon church, but the men are not permitted to hold the priesthood, which is given to all other worthy male members twelve years of age and older. This policy creates a very real tension for some church members. Many feel that accepting the position counters their own sense of brotherhood and puts them in opposition to current public sentiment. On the other hand, rejecting the church policy would violate their faith in the church's divine guidance and cause social alienation from the other members. The policy thus creates a feeling of alienation from American culture in general and results in a sense of conflict with Blacks in particular. Folklore depicting Black violence towards Mormons expresses this alienation. Some of the stories become connected with the Horse Shoe Prophecy mentioned earlier and explain how Blacks will destroy what is most sacred to the Mormons:

John Taylor is supposed to have said that the Negroes will march to the west and that they will tear down the gates to the temple, ravage the women therein, and destroy and desecrate the temple. Then the Mormon boys will pick up deer rifles and destroy the Negroes and that's when blood will run down the street.¹⁸

They also explain how blood will come to be running down the gutters of the Salt Lake streets:

Salt Lake City will be overcome by violence. The Black Panthers will begin to control the cities and the police will patrol the streets. A war will occur within Salt Lake City and because of this war blood will literally run in the streets of Salt Lake as a sign of the last days.¹⁹

These apocalyptic stories, then, give us good insight into the anxieties and concerns of a people who share with others the problems of the age yet who are still aware of their own peculiarity and who remember the kind of intense hostility that peculiarity can inspire. But the stories are more than mere reflections of the people. The Saints use them to promote and maintain the validity of their world view. In the lore the Saints affirm and reaffirm the prophetic utterances and reveal their impulse to protect

¹⁷ Susan Peterson, 1976.

¹⁸ Wayne Turley, 1975.

¹⁹ Susan Driggs, 1975.

a tenacious faith that is an anomaly in today's world. At the same time, they reveal their need to be reasonable, to see logical causes for events that seem, at best, improbable. Therefore, though many of the stories reflect an implicit faith in the scriptures, others seek to "explain" how these things can happen and put them into an acceptable and logical framework.

The folk items that reflect firm faith in the validity of the scriptures are simply statements made to prove fulfillment or near-fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecies. For example, the Bible predicts extensive natural disasters in the last days. The lore of the folk reinforces this belief by predicting that California will soon fall into the ocean and substantiates the prediction with the assertion that the temple in Oakland, California, unlike other Mormon temples, was not dedicated to stand through the millenium.²⁰ Similarly, stories of the Three Nephites, which have received considerable attention from folklorists,²¹ mirror Mormon faith in the truthfulness of their own scripture and in the fact that the last days are truly at hand. The stories grow out of the Book of Mormon account of the three men who were granted the privilege of living until the end of the world to help the Lord with His work. Much of the lore tells of these divine helpers appearing and intervening on behalf of the Saints or bringing a message from God. In some accounts the Nephites bring a warning of imminent disaster or of the shortness of the days and of the need for the year's supply of food church leaders have instructed members to store.²² The presence of these Nephites is a sign that the end is near. As one informant stated: "Everyone knows that when the Three Nephites start appearing the end is near."²³

In some of the lore accounts are mixed as the stories circulate. The eleventh chapter of the Book of Revelation contains an apocalyptic prophecy of two prophets who would preach 1,000 days in Jerusalem, be killed, and lie dead in the streets for three days. Two folk versions of this account have the two prophets changed to three prophets or three missionaries, infusing the Nephite legend into the prophecy and affirming the validity of both the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

²⁰ Stanley Denton, 1975. The notion that California will fall into the ocean is widespread in contemporary lore. It echoes the earlier story in the 1930s that Chicago would fall into Lake Michigan. See Richard K. Beardsley and Rosalie Hankey, "The Vanishing Hitchhiker," *California Folklore Quarterly* 1 (1942): 321.

²¹ See Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 244-76; and Austin E. Fife and Alta Fife, *Saints of Sage and Saddle* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), pp. 233-52.

²² See William A. Wilson, "The Vanishing Hitchhiker among the Mormons," *Indiana Folklore* 8 (1975): 80-99.

²³ Brian Thompson, 1975.

Not only are the scriptures affirmed, but the validity of modern-day prophets and prophecies is also reinforced in the lore. Brigham Young once said that one day the United States Constitution would hang by a thread and that Mormon elders would step forth and save it. In the 1964 presidential elections it was apparent (as it always is during election time) that the government was no longer functioning effectively and that the Constitution was indeed hanging by a thread. A story circulating at the time declared that George Romney, the Mormon presidential hopeful, would be the Mormon elder to save the Constitution.²⁴ Another story asserted that Elder Ezra Taft Benson, a politically involved member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, would be the man to save the country.²⁵

But not all of the stories are simple affirmations of faith. Much of this apocalyptic lore reveals a need to make hard-to-believe predictions seem "explainable" in terms of current phenomena. Some prophecies predict events that seem too fantastic ever to be fulfilled; the lore functions to create a cause-effect chain which makes fulfillment seem logical. For example, the moon will turn to blood because of rational causes: pollution, war, space technology. Blood will run in the streets because of a logical Black-Mormon conflict. In his tenth Article of Faith, Joseph Smith stated, "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the ten tribes." Mormon folklore finds various ways to explain how such a large body of people, lost since Biblical times, can remain hidden from the rest of the world. The stories say that they are under the North Pole, on the North Star, or in the Bermuda Triangle.²⁶ One version even asserts that they are in the center of the earth:

Down in Mexico, there is a large cliff, and up on this cliff there is a big cave opening. Nobody has ever been able to get into this cave. The cave is just underneath a big overhanging ledge. Because of this ledge, it is impossible to swing into the cave on a rope. People have come real close to swinging into it, but they have never made it. The cliff is so high that you can't get to the cave from the bottom either. David O. McKay said that the cave led to the center of the earth, and that it was the access to the outer world for the ten tribes.²⁷

Other prophecies tell us that the City of Zion, taken from the earth in ancient days, will be returned, the sun will be darkened, and the stars will fall from the sky. The lore explains how all this will happen:

²⁴ Jack Goodwin, 1975.

²⁵ Joan Weathers, 1975.

²⁶ Wade Sorenson, Greg Blakely, Wayne Turley, 1975.

²⁷ Rodney Lisonbee, 1975.

In the last days there are going to be signs that precede the coming of Christ. Some of these are the darkening of the sun, the earth will waver as a drunken man, the stars will fall, and the Ten Tribes will return. These prophecies are going to occur when the City of Enoch descends back to earth. As the city comes down it will block out the light of the sun, giving an eclipse effect. The city will then fall to the earth. When the city hits the earth it will knock the earth out of orbit and cause a shift of the earth's axis. This would cause the change of the stars and also cause the earth to waver as a drunken man. As the earth shifts on its axis it will also cause the polar caps to change and the continents will come together. This would then enable the Ten Tribes to return by crossing on dry land.²⁸

In this apocalyptic legend, then, we see emerging the desire to justify faith, to make the unbelievable more probable. In a day when science is exalted and the miraculous is scorned, the apocalyptic lore provides pseudo-scientific explanations as a supplement to faith. For two thousand years Christians have been waiting for the end of the world "in this generation." Mormons have been expecting the end almost since the beginning of the church in the nineteenth century. But the end keeps delaying, and to keep their faith intact the Saints infuse their lore with concrete assurances that the predicted signs are indeed coming to pass or are shortly to come to pass in logical and predictable ways. George Romney becomes the man to save the Constitution, and the Chinese Communists become the reasons for the wars and rumors of wars. So the lore combines all the explicit signs of faith with many implicit signs of insecurity about the truth of prophecy. The need to find reasons and to justify prophecy are in themselves signs of pervasive doubt.

The last-day stories reveal more than just subtle doubts that need the reassurance of logic; they reveal also a spirit of speculation that manifests itself in the somewhat startling assertions of the lore. The last-prophet series is an excellent example of such predictions. As almost every president of the church since the time of Heber J. Grant has assumed office the lore has identified him as the last prophet before the end. President Grant was supposed to have been the last prophet because of a series of pictures in the Church Office Building:

President Heber J. Grant is the last president of the Church and the last days have begun. The reason for this being true is that in the Church Office Building there is a place where they hang the pictures of the prophets on the walls. It seems that there is no more room on that wall for any more prophets so therefore the last days must be here and Heber J. Grant is the last prophet.²⁹

²⁸ Hal Draney, 1975.

²⁹ Joan Weathers, 1975.

When President Grant died the story changed and President McKay became the "last prophet." The setting also changed—from the Church Office Building to the Salt Lake Temple:

I have been told that there are nine holes or spaces in the walls of the Salt Lake Temple. The spaces were inspired to be there but the builders didn't know why they were there. Later it was figured out that they were supposed to be filled up by the pictures of the presidents of the Church. The first president, Joseph Smith, did not have a beard. The last president was also not supposed to have a beard and David O. McKay was the last president. All the holes were filled up and he didn't have a beard. Also the last president was supposed to be an omen, and David O. McKay's middle name was Oman. So he was supposed to be the last president.²⁰

President McKay's name had an important part in the stories that named him as the last prophet:

President McKay is very old right now; but when he was a boy, the Patriarch of the Church gave him a blessing and promised him that he would never die. He is the "David" spoken of in the scriptures who will lead Israel in the last days.²¹

President Joseph Fielding Smith's name was also an important part of the "evidence" used to show that he too would be the last prophet:

The Church was organized by Joseph Smith, so in the last days the President's name would be Joseph Smith. He would be president when Christ returned.²²

When Harold B. Lee became president, the picture-on-the-wall-of-the-temple story resurfaced to show that he would be the last prophet. It circulated along with several other stories. One proposed that President Lee had been informed in his patriarchal blessing that he would usher in the millenium. Both he and his successor, President Kimball, were supposed to be last because of the importance of the number twelve:

I heard when Harold B. Lee became prophet that he would be the last prophet because Christ would come and reign as the twelfth head of the Church. Since then, I have heard that Spencer W. Kimball will be the last prophet because he is the twelfth prophet. (The number twelve is a significant number in our Church as there were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles.)²³

In general, then, Mormons tell stories like these to establish the validity of prophecy and to strengthen the faith of the wavering. But

²⁰ Wayne Turley, 1975.

²¹ Donald Dorkee, 1971.

²² Susan Harvey, 1975.

²³ Janet Christoffersen, 1975.

at times they seem interested at least as much in shocking their listeners as in promoting their faith or encouraging them to righteous action. Concentrating on the proximity of the end, some of the pronouncements are made up of mathematical calculations which approximate the date of the end by such things as the age of the earth and the history of wars. The simplest and most common calculations date the end in the year 2000:

The last days will come in the year 2000 because they figure that the Millenium will begin then because one of the Lord's days is like a thousand of our years and this is the beginning of the seventh thousand year. Christ was born after 5000 years.³⁴

Many times this method of dating includes the date April 6 because of the Mormon belief that April 6 is the real birthdate of Christ. Other stories pinpoint the date because of external evidence such as Egyptian tombs with elaborate predictions of world events. In one account collected from a Brigham Young University freshman, the date is taken from a tablet of Moses:

A friend of mine went to California or Nevada, somewhere around there, and saw a thing or display called the tablet of Moses that told the history of the world from beginning to end and predicted all the wars, like the civil war, and how many years they lasted. This could all be figured out mathematically and there was a chart next to it explaining it. It said that Christ would come on September 15, 2015.³⁵

Another item just reports that someone has it on good authority that a church leader said the end would be in twenty-eight years.³⁶

Some of the stories do not fix the date of the end. They just emphasize that the end is "sooner than you think." Several tell about President McKay on his knees pleading with the Lord for more time, or discussing the end with the Lord:

This friend came up to Salt Lake this last April for General Conference, and the day before the first session, visited the temple. While there he, and the group he was with, were informed by one of the General Authorities, that President David O. McKay had recently been spending a great deal of time in the temple, talking with Christ and preparing for His Second Coming.³⁷

³⁴ Sandy Powell, 1975.

³⁵ Ruth Henry, 1975.

³⁶ Gary Smart, 1975.

³⁷ Susan Embry, 1962.

Other versions report President McKay emerging from the temple with a white face, saying, "I had no idea time was so short," and urging the Saints to get their supply of food:

When Kennedy was elected president of the United States, it was reported that President McKay went to the temple to pray about it. Afterwards, as he left the temple, he would only say that the Mormon people should get their supply of food as soon as possible.³⁸

This series is especially paradoxical because of its complete disregard of the Savior's response to a when-will-the-world-end question: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). This kind of folklore demonstrates a vein of sensationalism that runs through the whole body of apocalyptic folklore and explains why people react the way they do and why their leaders keep responding to the stories so harshly. Like thrillseekers who have dulled their emotions and sensitivities and turn to increasingly explicit and violent means to satisfy their need to feel, religious thrillseekers whose spiritual sensitivity has been dulled will turn to cataclysmic doom-saying and the telling of chill-producing folklore to satisfy a need for some kind of faith and some response from a listener.

The stories do indeed produce action but very often not the action church leaders attempt to encourage when they remind the Saints that the end is near. At times church members who believe the lore fall prey to cultist philosophies and apostate teachings. And sometimes their faith is destroyed rather than reinforced, or they become less prepared rather than more so. Many people, for example, believed in the Dream Mine stories spread earlier in the century and lost money investing in an unproductive mine. More recently the Saints in a branch of the church in the Midwest, hearing that the prophet was getting ready to call people to go back to Missouri, stopped work on their half-finished chapel and started to pack their goods for the trip. The stake president had to assign a high councilman to quell the rumor and persuade the Saints to go to work, continue to build their chapel, and resume their normal lifestyle.³⁹ A woman in another part of the church said, "Oh I'm not going to get a year's supply of food. They've been telling me the end is coming all my life and it hasn't come. I'll probably be long gone before I'll ever need a year's supply of food."⁴⁰

³⁸ Merlene Holt, 1962.

³⁹ William A. Wilson, 1976.

⁴⁰ Susan Peterson, 1976.

Results like this are probably the reason LDS church authorities have had to take a public stand against many of the stories. When the stories about himself as last prophet were circulating, President Harold B. Lee made this statement to a seminar for church leaders:

One of the amazing phenomena of today among our people is their gullibility to seize upon rumors without identifying the source. . . . Therein lies the greatest problem we confront today. It is not do we need more prophets, but as President Clark said aptly one time, "We need more listening ears." President McKay was said to have had a vision in the Los Angeles Temple. He had gone into a room to have a rest and when he came out to address the congregation someone saw him, and all the rest of it was pure fabrication.

I was supposed to have said in setting apart a missionary that when he returned from his mission, Salt Lake City would be evacuated and [we would] be living out on the salt flats in tents. I have had a patriarchal blessing, so someone reports, that I would be President of the Church when the Savior would come. I was alleged to have said that some would be living when the Savior comes. Maybe we will, but I have not had the temerity to say it because the Lord said, "Not even the angels would know the time of His coming." He would come in a time which would be as a thief in the night. . . .

Don't you brethren yield to rumor or in any form the spirit of fear. Let yours be as though the Apostle Paul were speaking to you, "for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind."⁴¹

President Lee criticized the apocalyptic folklore because it was not consistent with the official aims and doctrines of the church. But though the lore does frequently inspire actions church leaders do not admire, it paradoxically develops squarely out of the ancient and modern scriptures church leaders cite to warn the people to prepare for the end. As long as the church retains its apocalyptic vision, then, it seems reasonably sure that Mormon folklore, that "sensitive and immediate indicator of social conditions," will, for better or worse, retain its apocalyptic character, mirroring folk response to official teaching and providing valuable information to those who want to understand the hearts and minds of the people.

⁴¹ Statement made by Harold B. Lee at a seminar for regional representatives of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, April 3, 1970.



Osmyn Deuel cabin, presently located on Temple Square. Utah State Historical Society photograph by Charles R. Savage.

*Some Botanical Cures
in Mormon Folk Medicine:
An Analysis*

BY RICHARD C. POULSEN

WHILE EXAMINING A RATHER sizeable collection of folk beliefs in the University of Utah Folklore Archives not long ago, I came across an interesting cure for pneumonia, which I repeat verbatim here:

To cure pneumonia, get your wife to wear the same pair of underpants for one month. Then put the underpants in a bowl (of specific dimensions) of warm water and wash them (with some particular kind of homemade soap). Drink the water left in the bowl after washing.¹

Dr. Poulsen is assistant professor of English at Brigham Young University.

¹ Collected by Sally Hurth, Salt Lake City, 1965, from Chris Van Orman, University of Utah Folklore Archives.

I use this example of "folk medicine" for good reason: other than the fact that the informant called the cure an old Karelian remedy, the interested scholar knows absolutely nothing about the circumstances surrounding the interview, if the informant believed in the cure, or where he got it, which, in a sense, makes this rather sensational bit of information, be it hoax or fact, virtually useless.

According to Alan Dundes in his well-known "Texture, Text, and Context": "One reason for collecting context is that only if such data is provided can any serious attempt be made to explain *why* a particular text is used in a particular situation."² Dundes here was discussing riddles, but later he asserted that "the collection of context is essential for all genres of folklore. . . ."³ Folklorists have "traveled far" through the promptings of Dundes and others, but even today the concept of context is paid nothing more than lip service by many folklorists, especially in the realm of folk belief.

In calling for more contextual study I am not insinuating archives are useless; I am saying they could be made more useful. In my own collecting of folk cures among the Mormons,⁴ I was, like many others, impressed both by the variety of cures and their oftentimes unorthodox application. However, as the title of this article indicates, I have not attempted to collect *every* example in Utah of folk medicine, or even of one particular cure. Rather, my method is analysis, and beyond the unique, I think, lies the question, again, of how such cures affect the group or groups that exercise them, why they are used, when they are used, and how they are used.

Most of my informants hail from the fairly small, highly conservative, central Utah community of American Fork. My interest in botanical cures among the Mormons was originally piqued by a middle-aged woman in that town who wears onion slices on her neck to alleviate arthritis. According to the informant:

I get arthritis in my neck, and when I do I slice up a large onion [any kind will do as long as it's large], put the slices in a cloth, and wrap it around my neck. The arthritis will draw the juice right out of the onion. When I first started I had to leave it on all night, but now an hour or two will do it.

² "Texture, Text, and Context," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 28 (1964): 256.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁴ One should not assume that folk medical beliefs held among Mormons are indigenous to their religion or society. As discussed later, Mormon pioneers brought most of their "cures" with them to the West; most of them probably practiced folk medicine to some degree before they became Mormons.

An interesting aspect of this botanical cure is that the informant has discovered a cumulative healing effect in the onion slices that improves with use. In 1972 a student at the University of Utah collected an onion cure in Springville, Utah, similar in method to my informant's: "You take an onion, slice it, put it on a piece of cloth and wrap it around the kid's neck. I'd tried everything else [for severe croup], and it worked."⁵ My informant also uses slices of onions folded in cabbage leaves and tied on the back to alleviate pain. In her own words: "Make an onion poultice and wrap it around what hurts." She mentioned other botanical cures, such as cucumbers removing liver spots from the skin, potato poultices being good for gout, and grape juice being an excellent blood purifier. She claims her husband was cured of something much like rheumatic fever by drinking sugarless grape juice; but the onion cures are her forte, and in them she is a firm believer.

She became interested in folk medicine when her husband developed ulcers, which sugarless grape juice helped alleviate. Interestingly, she has gleaned most of her folk medical knowledge from books, which would seem to preclude, at least partially, the oral and aural aspects of the lore; but her own adaptations of the onion cures, for example, have transcended book knowledge.⁶ She explained carefully that it is the juice in the onion that alleviates the pain of arthritis. The juice, she claims, is actually drawn into her neck, and when she is finished with a treatment the onions are almost completely dried. Therefore, as my informant explained, one slices the onion in a way most advantageous for the extraction of juices.

When I asked her if she knew anyone else in town who used these remedies she told me she didn't know many people, "and besides, most people laugh when you talk to them about this." She also told me that the family has no doctor bills. For her, the onion remedies work much better than the pain pills her doctor once prescribed, with none of the aftereffects. She nearly passed out in the bank one day after taking a pain pill.

Use of onions in folk medicine is widespread. Two other informants from American Fork, a married couple, eighty-five and eighty-one respectively, also knew of many onion cures. The woman had used onions

⁵ Collected by Rosemary Brown, Springville, Utah, 1972, from Barbara E. H. Brown, University of Utah Folklore Archives.

⁶ That is, neither the cumulative healing effects of the onion nor the method of slicing the herb came from her books. She has developed these techniques with time and persistent practice, she said.

for many kinds of poultices, and someone she knew, whose name she had forgotten, "tied the feet right up in onion poultices and it would draw the sickness right out of the body through the feet." Her father made cough syrup out of the ubiquitous honey-and-onion concoction. She says: "I know that some families used onions a lot in the early days. Some said they didn't know how to get well until they got into their onions."

In her "Pioneer Remedies from Western Kansas," Amy Lathrop reported, but did not delineate, onion cures in that state—especially for treatment of croup in cough syrup form.⁷ In his "Pioneer Mormon Remedies," Austin E. Fife reported the wrapping of a sore breast in cabbage leaves to alleviate pain⁸ but mentioned few specific onion cures.

University of Utah archives are replete with onion cures, one of which says: "Cut a raw onion into small pieces and tape them to the skin with Scotch Tape. Onions, according to Mrs. Latsos are antibiotic and take the bruise away."⁹ Here, the usual cloth binder for the poultice has been supplanted by Scotch Tape.

According to Eddie W. Wilson in an excellent article called "The Onion in Folk Belief": "... it is evident that the onion has not been surpassed in the realm of folk belief by any other plant."¹⁰ According to Wilson:

In religious legend, the onion has been associated with the Garden of Eden and with Paradise. There is a tradition in the East that when Satan stepped out of the Garden of Eden after the Fall of Man, onions sprang up from the spot where he placed his right foot, and garlic from where his left foot touched.¹¹

Further: "In its alleged battle against infection, the onion is said by English folk to act as an absorbent or purifier."¹² As already noted, to my American Fork informant, it was not the onion that was the absorbent, but the arthritic joints of her neck, even though the onions, to her, did act in a sense as a purifier, or purger of pain.

According to Wilson, the Marathi of India believe that when a severe illness comes bread and onions should be eaten.¹³ In comparison,

⁷ *Western Folklore* 20 (1961): 1-22.

⁸ *Western Folklore* 16 (1957): 157.

⁹ Collected by Marc Record, Salt Lake City, 1971, from Esme Latsos, University of Utah Folklore Archives.

¹⁰ *Western Folklore* 12 (1953): 104.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

two young sisters from American Fork told me jokingly that when their parents were married in the Salt Lake Temple the groom noticed his bride had a bad cold and told her to eat an onion sandwich. It cured the cold.

Although the old couple mentioned earlier knew a fair number of onion cures, their specialties seemed to be potatoes and Brigham tea. In their family memory book is a section concerning one Lucian Jacob who had become a widower (ca. 1868). About Lucian is written:

After returning home Lucian hired different girls and women to keep house for himself and remaining three children. It was almost impossible to get a dependable person. While one woman was making soap a serious accident happened. Lucian, the youngest boy, fell into the boiling soap. Some flesh was completely cooked. Maria Gerber, the town doctor, saved the child's life by applying poultices of scraped potatoes. She worked over him day and night.³⁴

In retelling this instance from her own memory, the informant told me the burns were completely healed by the potato poultice; and according to her, this remedy was used widely by Mormon pioneers for all sorts of burns. This particular story is well known by the daughter of the couple and by their grandchildren.

According to the daughter, as a young girl she frequently worked in the fields and the family garden. One day when weeding onions, she received a severe sunburn along a three-inch strip on her back where her blouse and pants separated. Her mother finely grated a whole potato onto a strip of cheesecloth and applied it to the burn. "It pulled the fire right out—cooked the potato," she said. "It was done well enough to eat." Two of the grandchildren told me this story also, saying "there was so much heat in the sunburn that the potatoes were almost completely done—they could have been eaten."

If the onion has not been surpassed in the realm of folk belief by any other plant, the potato certainly runs a close second in Utah and the West. Amy Lathrop said:

One man, badly burned about the face and eyes by an arc welding torch was blinded and could not find a doctor at the time. A sympathetic friend made poultices of raw potato parings, which she said was the best and quickest way to draw out the "heat."³⁵

³⁴ *Memory Book of Motoni Gerber and Emily Jane Jacob*, p. 6. Privately published in 1955 in limited edition for family members.

³⁵ Lathrop, "Pioneer Remedies," p. 6.

As with the American Fork remedies, the potato poultices here actually drained the heat. Also, said Mrs. Lathrop: "One voracious woman tells me she has used thin potato parings for both corns and calluses on her feet and they remove the pain or 'fire.'" ¹⁶

According to an informant in Salt Lake City: "Some people I used to know believed that if you boil potatoes and leave them in their skins and then put them around the feet the cold would go away." ¹⁷ This cure for a cold is very close in method and results to the onions-around-the-feet cure for "sickness." Another informant said: "My family has a remedy for arthritis. You are supposed to hold a raw potato wherever you have the arthritis. After a few days, the potato will become petrified from whatever was causing the arthritis. Just keep putting raw potatoes on until it is gone." ¹⁸

About folk cures for arthritis Wayland D. Hand has written that "curing rheumatism by various kinds of absorptive measures is common." ¹⁹ This is certainly the case among Utah Mormons. For the American Fork couple both onions and potatoes take the pain out of the body, while for the informant using onion slices on her neck, the juice of the onion was drawn into the afflicted part. Peggy Anderson, one informant already quoted from the University of Utah Folklore Archives, is vague about the petrification of the potato, but it seems likely that the petrification of the joint by disease was passed onto the vegetable. In like manner runs this cure: "Put a piece of potato in a small bag and hang it around your neck to ward off rheumatism. When potato goes hard, replace with another piece of potato." ²⁰ A potato cure from Kansas is much like this Utah cure:

One woman of eighty years said her father and others were wont to carry a small potato in their pockets to ward off rheumatism. Her father carried his for years. It became very hard, but he never suffered rheumatism pains. As her brother grew up, he, too, started carrying a potato. ²¹

Finally, Vance Randolph recorded the following in his *Ozark Superstitions*:

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷ Collected by Nanette Roberts, Salt Lake City, 1967, from Ruth Roberts, University of Utah Folklore Archives.

¹⁸ Collected by Doug Trotter, Tooele, Utah, 1968, from Peggy Anderson, University of Utah Folklore Archives.

¹⁹ "Folk Medical Magic and Symbolism in the West," *Forms upon the Frontier*, ed. Austin E. Fife and Henry Glassie, Utah State University Monograph Series, no. 16 (Logan: Utah State University, 1969), p. 113.

²⁰ Collected by Lois L. Metz, Nephi, Utah, 1967, from Priscilla Lunt, University of Utah Folklore Archives.

²¹ Lathrop, "Pioneer Remedies," p. 19.

... there are men in Arkansas who are always careful to plant onions and potatoes on the opposite sides of the garden, believing that potatoes will not do well if onions are growing too close.²²

Possibly this very kind of folk logic could account for the seemingly opposite curative effects of onions and potatoes I found in American Fork, Utah—that is, potato as drawer vs. onion as absorber. However, in many folk remedies from curing warts to easing pain, the onion and potato are used similarly.²³

Other botanical cures common in the Mormon past and present include the use of milkweed, tobacco juice, catnip, and pine gum for various remedies, cucumber slices for sore eyes, and flaxseed for a number of cures. According to Austin Fife, of all the herbal medicines and stimulants in the Intermountain area, Brigham tea is the one which is of widest application.²⁴ In my own collecting and studies, potato and onion cures ran far ahead of Brigham tea in range of application, but this seemingly peculiar Mormon remedy is an important cure-all. The plant, whose scientific name is *Ephedra viridis*²⁵ or green ephedra, is commonly called Mormon tea, desert plant, pop weed, or Brigham weed. A common bush ranging from Utah to California, it did and does function as a popular Mormon remedy. Austin Fife, has stated that “faithful Mormons will assure you that the medical value of Brigham tea was a matter of divine inspiration to Brigham Young, hence its name.”²⁶ However, this statement is misleading. The large majority of “faithful” Mormons today have not heard of Brigham tea—and many of the faithful who have will unhesitatingly assure you that not only is the drinking of such tea not inspired but that naming the weed after a prophet borders on blasphemy—although there are many that do believe in the unlimited healing qualities of the herb. Brigham Young, according to oral tradition, was supposed to have imbibed his namesake regularly, of which I was assured by a number of informants. According to a small book on Dixie folklore, Brigham tea was good for indigestion, for purifying the blood, for fevers, for colds, for bringing out a rash, and for a variety of similar complaints.²⁷

²² *Ozark Superstitions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), p. 35.

²³ See Lathrop, “Pioneer Remedies,” p. 9, for example.

²⁴ Fife, “Pioneer Mormon Remedies,” p. 154.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Fife mistakenly (p. 154) called the plant *Ephedra viderens*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Arthur Knight Hafen, *Dixie Folklore and Pioneer Memoirs*, 3d ed. (St. George: Author, 1964), p. 13.

The old man from American Fork, who calls the herb desert plant, claims, together with his wife, that Brigham Young was indeed inspired to introduce the tea. One man, says my informant, swears that if Brigham Young had done nothing but introduce the tea to the Saints he would have done a great work. The old man collects the plant yearly in August in the desert west of Fairfield, Utah; and according to him, Brigham tea is very good for bladder and urinary tract problems, both as cure and preventative, probably because of its mineral content. He thinks the plant is probably rich in copper because of the appearance of the ring in the teapot when the herb is steeped. A sister of his wife uses the tea faithfully for arthritis.

The children and grandchildren of the old couple occasionally drink the tea, which they obtain from their grandfather. The granddaughters are a bit skeptical but believe Brigham Young drank the tea regularly. The daughter, who was cured of sunburn by the potato poultice, is not skeptical but does not keep a supply of the tea on hand like her parents. The couple also makes a tea from chaparral, which they collect occasionally in the St. George area. This herb is supposed to be especially good for arthritis.

Of wide use in the Mormon past, but evidently a dying institution, is the drinking of sagebrush tea. "The common western sagebrush," according to Austin Fife, "vies for first place with Brigham tea in the folk medicine of Mormonia."²⁸ A number of informants mentioned this remedy, but among none of those I interviewed was it in current use. As a boy, the old man from American Fork drank the strong tea regularly in the spring as a blood purifier. He said that every spring his father would gather sage and brew a large pot of the tea, from which the entire family would drink for a number of days. In the spring, he said, the foul tasting stuff would cleanse all the impurities from the blood that had accumulated during the winter. Possibly, one of the reasons this remedy has died out when the herb is so common in the West is because of its bitter, unsavory flavor.

Again from Norton County, Kansas, Amy Lathrop reported that the use of sage as a medicinal herb dates from the ancients²⁹ and that a cure for diphtheria was to inhale the fumes of sage tea.³⁰ Of course, what Mrs. Lathrop referred to was common garden sage, for which the settlers

²⁸ Fife, "Pioneer Mormon Remedies," p. 155.

²⁹ Lathrop, "Pioneer Remedies," p. 13.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

probably found an easy substitute in the Far West in the form of the omnipresent wild sage.

Possibly, a consideration of the implications of Mormon folk cures, botanical and otherwise, is one problem that arises from a collection of such remedies; and such implications, as discussed earlier, are only evident through a close study of contextual data. About the use of folk medicine, Joseph Smith wrote: "And whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food. . . ." ³¹ Smith also said: "And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man. . . ." ³² In the light of such statements, one wonders why the Mormon religion did not become a religion espousing folk medicine, which it certainly has not become. Although the acceptability of faith healing—which may rightfully be termed a type of internal magic or magic of the spirit—is common and even encouraged in the church, the external magic of herbal and botanical cures, indeed the whole realm of tangible folk remedies, receives an icy shoulder.

In a letter to Hector Lee, George Albert Smith, eighth president of the church, wrote:

As to folklore regarding weather, planting, butchering, doctoring, etc., I have never heard of any such lore among our people; indeed, their whole training would be against the superstitions which usually lie behind such folklore as you seem to have in mind. Whatever there may be would be such as they brought with them from their places of origin and which would be looked upon, I am very sure, by our people today as mere superstitions without any foundation in the doctrines of the church. ³³

Both tone and content of this letter seem to be in opposition to Joseph Smith's statements, another of which I include here:

Sunday, Sept. 5, 1841. I preached to a large congregation at the stand, on the science and practice of medicine, desiring to persuade the Saints to trust in God when sick, and not in an arm of flesh, and live by faith and not by medicine, or poison; and when they were sick, and had called for the Elders to pray for them, and they were not healed, to use herbs and mild food. ³⁴

³¹ Doctrine and Covenants 42:43.

³² Ibid., 89:10.

³³ Hector Lee, "The Three Nephites: The Substance and Significance of the Legend in Folklore" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1947), p. 219.

³⁴ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1963), p. 190.

It may well be that Mormondom has managed, collectively, to almost thoroughly ignore folk medicine because of the exaltation of "science" by the religion. Brigham Young's intense interest, for example, in Othniel Marsh's discovery of *Orohippus* and other fossil remains, led to a meeting in Salt Lake City between the two about the existence of horses in prehistoric America.³⁵ Marsh ascertained their existence, and Young was elated because this was scientific "proof" of one of the disputed assertions of the Book of Mormon. Since it is deemed necessary by a fair share of the Mormon community to prove by any means that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that larger belief remains viable and current. But when science, the true buttress of true religion, through modern medicine has scoffed at folk cures as quackery or worse, then they must go as a sort of sacrificial offering to higher things. So, almost ironically, for a religion with identifiable roots in folk medicine—which roots were once a living part of every Mormon pioneer community—the cures of the folk have gone underground, with little hope of resuscitation even by the health food revival. I mention this because most of my informants, whether weak or strong religious believers, felt that they would be made fun of for belief in the efficacy of folk medicine.

Even though Mormon folk medicine is part of a nearly invisible culture within a culture within a culture, the practice of folk medicine is reality to many of the orthodox in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And even though the practice of folk medicine in the Mormon West is merely a vestige of what it once was, it seems to be persistent, almost ritualistic behavior among many today. I use *ritual* in the sense Mody C. Boatright indicated when he said: "Ritualistic behavior is both repetitive and nonrational."³⁶ Of course, all repetitive and nonrational behavior is not ritualistic; but when a Mormon woman, believer in botanical folk cures, slices an onion in a certain way for a specific reason, and applies the poultice in prescriptive manner, then that person is involved in ritualistic behavior. And it is the magic of such behavior, call it placebo or poison, superstition or wonder cure, that almost surely ensures that Mormon folk medicine will remain a part of the Saints in spite of what anyone might say or believe, because folklore is an inextricable thread in the twine of Mormonism.

³⁵ From an article originally published in the *New York Tribune*, November 17, 1873, reprinted in Charles Shucert and Clara Mae LeVene, *O. C. Marsh: Pioneer in Paleontology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 137. See p. 480 for dates of discovery. *Orohippus* was a very small Eocene horse.

³⁶ "On the Nature of Myth," *Mody Boatright, Folklorist*, ed. Ernest B. Speck (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), p. 114.



A Bibliography of Studies in Mormon Folklore

BY WILLIAM A. WILSON

IN THE UNITED STATES the term *folklore* has often had a double meaning. On the one hand, it has signified the raw materials of folk tradition—the songs, the tales, the arts and crafts; on the other, it has meant the scholarly study and interpretation of those materials.

The raw materials of Mormon folklore which during the past 140 years have made their way into print are legion but are, for the most part, unorganized and uncatalogued. They are to be found in journals and diaries, in family and personal histories, in church magazines and newspapers, and in a large number of popular works like the *Juvenile Instructor's* Faith Promoting Series of the last century or Nels B. Lundwall's *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (1942) and Duane S. Crowther's *Life Everlasting* (1967) of this century. They are also to be found in the field-recorded items filed in the folklore archives at Utah State University, the University of Utah, and Brigham Young University.

The studies and interpretations of Mormon folklore are relatively few but are scattered through numerous books and journals. The bibliography below attempts to list most of these works. I say *most* because no bibliography is complete. Readers are encouraged to send in additional items for a later updating of this list.

I have included in the bibliography only those works that treat folklore as folklore—that is, as material to be studied for increased cultural understanding—and have excluded works that use folklore to support the arguments of theological treatises. Thus I have included Hector Lee's *The Three Nephites*, which uses the Nephite stories to delineate Mormon attitudes, but not Ogden Kraut's *The Three Nephites*, which uses the stories to defend Kraut's own particular religious vision. Hopefully the day will come when the raw folklore data lodged in the works of Kraut and others can also be catalogued.

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In Memoriam

Kate B. Carter

1892-1976

I cannot imagine Utah history and the story of its pioneers without the presence of Kate Carter. I had just returned to Salt Lake City after a long sojourn in the nation's capital only to be confronted with a newspaper notice of Mrs. Carter's death. My immediate and emotional reactions were mixed. Here was the passing of a woman who had many years ago taken me publicly to the woodshed for my less than respectful comments about the monument to the "only tree growing in the valley of the Great Salt Lake when the pioneers arrived on July 24, 1847." Yet here, too, was the passing of a great and noble lady who, although she could not apologize for "skinning me alive" invited me to be the principal speaker at

her annual luncheon the very next year. Her introduction, nearly a eulogy in retrospect, still makes me blush. We were close friends forever after.

Kate Bearnson Carter died on September 8, 1976, in the eighty-fourth year of her life. And a useful, vigorous, and distinguished life it was. She was born in Spanish Fork, Utah, on July 30, 1892, of an Icelandic father, Finnbogi Bearnson, and a Danish mother, Mary Jensen. She was graduated from Spanish Fork High School and attended Brigham Young University, University of Utah, and Henager's Business College. She married Austin Carter in 1914 and lived in Spanish Fork until 1926 when she and her husband moved to Salt Lake City. Her husband died in 1967. She is survived by a daughter, Kathryn Smith of Woods Cross, and two sons, Boyer A. Carter of Kaysville and Dr. Paul B. Carter of Logan.

It is for her service to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers that present and future generations will remember Kate B. Carter. For my generation Kate *was* the DUP and none will deny her that honor. Practically her entire adult life was devoted to its service, and from 1941 until her death she was its national president. In her dedicated commitment to recovering and recording the story of the Utah pioneers she wrote hundreds of articles and compiled them into thirty-seven volumes, including twelve volumes titled *Heart Throbs of the West*, nineteen volumes of *Our Pioneer Heritage*, and six volumes of *Treasures of Pioneer History*.

In addition to her lifelong labors in pioneer history, Kate performed yeoman services in civic and religious work. In World War II she served on the State War Production Board and on the Consumer and Conservation Program Committee. She was an active worker of the LDS church and its auxiliary organizations all her life.

Kate B. Carter was not without honors in her own time and was widely recognized for her services to pioneer history and to the welfare of mankind generally. Among other awards, she was given an honorary Doctorate of Humanities by Southern Utah State College. The National Association of Secretaries of State gave her a medallion for "Meritorious Public Service." The American Association for State and Local History gave her an Award of Merit for her accomplishments in local history, and in 1960 she was made an Honorary Life Member of the Utah State Historical Society.

In thinking about Kate in the writing of this piece and in looking at the first paragraph, I find I no longer have mixed feelings. Over the long years of our friendship and collaboration in the collection and preservation of Utah's pioneer history, Kate Carter, to me, stands a giant and well above all the rest, a lesson to all who come after.

A. R. MORTENSEN

Former Director

Utah State Historical Society



In Memoriam

Marguerite L. Sinclair Reusser

1898-1976

Marguerite L. Sinclair Reusser, former secretary-manager of the Utah State Historical Society, died September 2, 1976, at Oakland, California, at age seventy-eight. Her tenure began in 1937 when she became the Society's first full-time paid employee. Under her capable supervision WPA workers collected, transcribed, and filed historical materials; and she organized the beginnings of the library.

During the twelve years she presided over the Society's day-to-day affairs, Marguerite Sinclair won many supporters for Utah history. Her vivacious personality and considerable talent as a singer charmed legislators, and her public

relations skills brought many new members to the Society. Working with board president Herbert S. Auerbach and *Quarterly* editor J. Cecil Alter, she helped to lay a firm foundation for many of the Society's basic programs. In 1949 she resigned her position and left Utah to marry the late Herbert A. Reusser.

In recognition of her many contributions to the Society, the Board of State History named her an Honorary Life Member in 1966. It is with pride that I add my personal attestation of the outstanding services rendered to the people of Utah by Mrs. Reusser. She wielded the major influence in the Society during the eight years of my administration as governor and was primarily responsible for building the Historical Society on a solid foundation during the years of its infancy. Her vision of the magnitude and historical value of the legislative responsibilities placed on the Society contributed much toward the expanded and important services now being rendered. Without an adequate staff to assist her, Mrs. Reusser spent long working hours, far in excess of the number expected of her, in organizing and developing plans for the acquisition and preservation of historical data, for she loved her work.

It was fortunate that such a person as Marguerite Sinclair Reusser directed the affairs of the Society during the period of its beginnings as a state-funded organization.

HERBERT B. MAW
Governor of Utah
1941-49



BOOK REVIEWS

The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and La Sal, Utah. By FAUN McCONKIE TANNER. (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Company, 1976. 359 pp. \$14.95.)

The story of the Moab-La Sal region is as varied and colorful as its famous natural landscape. Occupied by prehistoric peoples for hundreds of years, the Moab area and its crossing of the Colorado River became important as the early New Mexican traders made their way across the Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to California. Earlier, Dominguez and Escalante had noted the La Sal Mountains during their epic journey of 1776. After the failure of the 1855 Mormon mission to the Elk Mountain Indians, settlement of southeastern Utah was delayed until the mid-1870s when cattlemen entered the area. Later, in the twentieth century, uranium, oil, and potash assumed paramount economic importance. The tremendous tourist boom, which followed the establishment of Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park, is a major force in the shaping of Moab's current history.

It is this story which Faun McConkie Tanner attempts to tell in her book, *The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and La Sal, Utah*. The book is an expanded version of an earlier work that appeared first in 1934 as a series of articles in the *Moab Times-Independent* and in 1937 was published as a slim volume entitled *A History of Moab, Utah*. Mrs. Tanner, a native of Moab and currently professor of social science at Phoenix College, has spent a lifetime collecting material for *The Far Country*.

The expanded edition does make a considerable amount of valuable mate-

rial available. The discussion of the early settlers of Moab and La Sal provides a sharper focus on them as individuals. The accounts of the early mail service, commerce between La Sal and Durango, the attempts to navigate on the Colorado River, and the importance of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad give a good idea of the isolated nature of "The Far Country." Although volumes could be written on the history of uranium and oil development in the area, Mrs. Tanner does provide an adequate sketch of these developments in the local history. The account of the Pinhook Battle of 1881 is a good example of the use of newly found material to describe a fight in which ten white men were killed by Indians.

One of the best chapters, entitled "A Characteristic Touch of Spice," touches on the folklore of the area. The lyrics of Fred Keller's song "Blue Mountain" are reproduced, and Mrs. Tanner provides a narrative interpretation, based on an oral interview with Judge Keller, of the text. The stories of the two cowboys who cooked ten pounds of rice to go with their beefsteak; the sheepherder who buried Roquefort cheese because he thought it was rotten; and the Dry Valley rancher who handled the objections of a wife to his planned visit to a Moab saloon by leaving her in a dome-like rock, which contained a sufficient supply of rainwater and later became appropriately known as Jail Rock, serve to portray the humor of Moab's early

residents. The full-page photographs also enhance the book's value greatly.

Unfortunately, there are several major flaws in the book. The reader who is anxious to follow the leads footnotes are intended to provide faces a frustrating exercise. Direct quotes are frequently not cited. In one chapter the *Deseret News* is noted only by its volume and number, not by day, month, and year. On other occasions direct quotes and bibliographic entries are not copied correctly. In one instance, however, a single sentence contains two footnotes that refer to the same source. The text is marred by abrupt changes, lengthy and often unnecessary quotes which could best be summarized by the writer, overstatements, inappropriate interjections, incoherent paragraph construction, and, on a few occasions, a condescending writing style. There is a good deal of repetition from chapter to chapter. Chapter 18, entitled "Economic Development in the Area," appears mislabeled, as the text is devoted primarily to tourist promotion. Many of these criticisms could have been reduced and perhaps eliminated by a competent job

of editing the manuscript before publication. However, it appears that the final copy was made from the original draft with little or no editorial assistance.

The content of the book suffers from an overemphasis of certain points, scenic beauty, natural wonders, and tourism, for example, while such themes as political affairs, religion, community growth, and the local fruit industry are given only slight attention. The author does call the reader's attention to the theories of Frederick Jackson Turner, his opponents, and Walter Prescott Webb; however, there is no attempt to develop a thesis or interpretation of the Moab-La Sal experience. There is also no attempt to put the experience in context with state and national developments.

Despite the need for other scholars to tell and interpret Grand County's history, Mrs. Tanner's book ranks far above most other community or county histories currently available in the state and will serve as a foundation for future work in the Moab area by other historians.

ALLAN KENT POWELL
Utah State Historical Society

Robbers Roost Recollections. By PEARL BAKER. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1976. 194 pp. \$6.95.)

Robbers Roost in southeastern Utah has been immortalized in story and legend. Connected with its history are names well known in the study of outlaws: Butch Cassidy, Matt Warner, Kid Curry, the Sundance Kid, to name but a few.

Now, added to those who contributed to the history of Robbers Roost is the unlikely name of Joe Biddlecome. Joe was not as famous as his contemporaries at the Roost, but his contributions have been longer lasting.

Pearl Baker is no novice in the field of outlaw history, and Robbers Roost has been the subject of several of her past efforts, notably *The Wild Bunch at*

Robbers Roost (Abelard-Schuman). However, in these earlier efforts, Pearl Baker gained most of her information second- and sometimes third-hand, and in this respect perhaps did not add as much to the history of the Roost as she could have.

With *Robbers Roost Recollections*, Pearl Baker has not only added much to the history of Robbers Roost but to a much-neglected area of Utah history—the cattle and ranch industry. In this account she writes from personal knowledge, with a real understanding of the subject, and one does not have to read far into the text to realize this. Pearl Baker has a fine understanding of ranch

life and reports it in an interesting and sometimes even delightful style, somewhat peculiar to herself.

To the reader searching for more outlaw history, this will be a disappointing volume, but rightly so, as it is refreshing to stray from the subject into a new application of Robbers Roost history. The flavor is still there, marvelously captured in Pearl Baker's unique style, and she does not hesitate to be direct. In speaking of Joe Biddlecome (who just happens to have been her father) she relates: "He took calves for wages, traded and acquired calves by other means (I am told)..."

The author was raised at Robbers Roost, the subject is very familiar to her, and she is adept at recreating these early scenes for the reader. Very observant, Pearl has been able to paint a picture for the reader—not only of cattle and ranch life at the Roost, but of wild horses, lizards, rattlesnakes, antelope,

and even the plants are not neglected—until the panorama of life at Robbers Roost unfolds in mind-filled color.

Most of all, *Robbers Roost Recollections* is exactly what the title implies, and it could not have been written by someone who had not experienced it. For the student of early range life, more especially in southeastern Utah, this volume is a must.

This reviewer has known Pearl Baker personally for many years, and in mutual endeavors we have shared disagreements on various subjects in a friendly battle of wits. However, in this volume not one severe criticism comes to mind, and one must bow to Pearl Baker's superior knowledge of the subject. The volume is not indexed, but one is not really required in this instance. A refreshing new approach to Robbers Roost history—recommended.

KERRY ROSS BOREN
Manila, Utah

An Army Wife on the Frontier: The Memoirs of Alice Blackwood Baldwin, 1867–1877. Edited and introduced by ROBERT C. CARRIKER and ELEANOR R. CARRIKER. Utah, the Mormons, and the West Series, no. 6. (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1975. 118 pp. \$8.00.)

Rivulets of perspiration coursing across sun-darkened skin—swirling snow and numbing cold—lightning stabbing leaden skies as thunder rolls like a drum beat before the storm—long hair and fear of losing it—these were the specters of military duty on the western frontier. But what of the distaff side of that life? What of the woman who lived there with her soldier, or longed for his companionship after months of separation? Did she have a viable view of the military family that could broaden understanding for this aspect of history?

The primary contribution to history of *An Army Wife on the Frontier* is to present a female perception of the military establishment on the Great Plains

during portions of the Indian Wars. The work is a storehouse of anecdotes that shed additional light on the military posture of that time.

The memoirs of Alice Blackwood Baldwin describe the almost unbearable conditions of life for an officer's lady who was accustomed to the creature comforts of civilization. Circumstances that were entirely adequate to the man familiar with the rigors of field duty were abominable to this wife. Leaking roofs, packing crate furniture, dirt floors, and lack of privacy were intolerable to this finishing school girl from back East. Ingenuity, army blankets, and a cooperative "make-do" attitude did much to alleviate the discomforts, however.

A man's memoirs may recount the excitement of an Indian engagement or the tedium of routine between battles. Mrs. Baldwin's reminiscences present different aspects of soldiering. Transportation and conditions encountered in travel, the effects of extremities of weather on family comfort, preparation of a Thanksgiving feast using bare essentials shipped from the East, supplemented by what could be gleaned from the land, are some of the feminine interests treated by her.

Mrs. Baldwin's account of the operation of military hierarchy and the role played by officers' wives in perpetuating it gives valuable insight into rank and the earning of promotion. Descriptions of teas, dances, hospitality extended to newcomers, comfort provided the sick and sorrowing, and Indian women being taught to groom themselves reveal the significant contribution made by soldiers' wives in civilizing the wilderness.

The frontier fort was not immune to the irritants common in most places. Mrs. Baldwin wrote that "children and chickens were a neverfailing cause of disturbances; also dogs. . . ." Her language is always polite, yet colorful:

" . . . we got but little sleep, for the 'pestilence that walketh by night' pursued us and made us sacrificial victims" portrays her encounter with fleas or bedbugs.

Dr. Robert C. Carriker and his wife, Eleanor, have done a superb job of editing this republished memoir. The work is well proofread and indexed. The five photographs used to illustrate the book are rather small, but they do satisfy the reader's curiosity as to the appearance of some of the primitive military facilities set forth by Mrs. Baldwin. The editors' excellent introduction puts the work into historical context. Omissions, errors, and distortions typical of memoirs are minimized by the introduction and liberal use of footnotes. The editors share with the reader their research in the unpublished documents of the Maj. Gen. Frank D. Baldwin Collection at the Henry E. Huntington Library. One can hope that these documents, which may have greater historical value than Mrs. Baldwin's memoirs, will soon be published and made available to historians.

DON R. MATHIS
Carmichael, California

"*Good Time Coming?*" *Black Nevadans in the Nineteenth Century*. By ELMER R. RUSCO. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975. Xx + 230 pp. \$13.95.)

The early chapters of the book document the presence of Black adventurers and pioneers in the Nevada territory. Included is a detailed account of white racism and how beliefs in white superiority led to the enactment of discriminatory legislation. One discovers that between 1861 and 1865 Blacks and other nonwhites could not vote, testify in court cases, serve on juries, be attorneys, or serve in the militia. The author points out that Nevada legislators were not unique in enacting discriminatory legislation. Similar forms of discrimination could be found in the statutes of California, Ohio, Iowa, and Oregon.

In a chapter entitled "A Revolution of Opinion" the author describes the gradual reduction of legislative discrimination against Black Nevadans. The Republican party dominated Nevada politics throughout the nineteenth century, and its leadership generally supported the policies of the Republican-dominated Congress of the 1860s and 1870s. The impact of national legislation that gave legal rights to former slaves in the South was cheered by Republican politicians and newspapers in Nevada. Although Nevada's politicians failed to immediately enact similar legis-

lation, there was limited support for acceptance of Blacks as equals. By 1881 Black Nevadans could vote, serve on juries, hold office, testify in courts, and attend the public schools.

According to Rusco, the Civil War and the ascendancy of the Republican party brought forth a new environment in which a number of Black Nevadans were determined to help decide what position Blacks would hold in the state. Petitions were signed, legal suits filed, and meetings held in which Blacks openly expressed their sentiments in the realm of patriotism and civil rights.

The second half of the book contains valuable information regarding the characteristics of the Black population between 1860 and 1890, the economic status of Blacks during the period, and the various organizational activities that developed within the Black community. Between 1860 and 1890 Nevada's Black population averaged three to four hundred. The majority resided in Virginia City, Carson City, and Reno. The Nevada mining boom of the late nineteenth century prompted the growth of the white and Black population. Although a limited number of Black residents were directly involved in mining, an independent Black mining company was formed in 1869. The Elevator Silver Mining Company was located at Treasure Hill in White Pine County. A few Black Nevadans were successful enough to acquire property and earn substantial incomes. Blacks in Nevada, like Blacks in many states, were generally excluded from participating in the social and cultural life and consequently developed their own churches and fraternal groups.

Although Black Nevadans did not have their own newspaper, there was

widespread circulation of two Black newspapers, the *Pacific Appeal* and the *Elevator*, both published in San Francisco. A few Black Nevadans served as voluntary correspondents to the newspapers, thus establishing an important and vital communication link.

The Black population declined from 396 in 1880 to 134 in 1900. The author attributes this to the economic decline of the period. This reduction in numbers coincided with increased white hostility toward Blacks and seems to have been a microcosm of what Blacks in the post-Reconstruction southern states were experiencing.

Through extensive study of the available census schedules and two Black newspapers, the author has skillfully recreated the social, economic, and political life and concerns of Nevada's early Black community. Historian Kenneth Porter views the book as "a pioneering work, [that] is immensely suggestive and stimulating for further historical study." The abundance of nineteenth-century materials and lack of similar materials for the early twentieth century limited the length of this study.

In 1900 the Black population of Nevada was 134 and by 1940 the figure had slowly risen to 664. The 1970 census indicates a Black population of over 27,000. Professor Lawrence B. de Graaf, in an assessment of Blacks in the West says, "The greatest vacuum in western history lies in the area of black urban history." There is a need to study the period between 1870 and 1940. Professor Rusco views "*Good Time Coming?*" as "a beginning of that task." I concur.

RONALD G. COLEMAN
University of Utah

The Kingdom or Nothing: The Life of John Taylor, Militant Mormon. By SAMUEL W. TAYLOR. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976. X + 406 pp. \$15.00.)

One of the recognized frontiers in Mormon scholarship is the lengthy list

of biographies of the church leaders, in particular the presidents of this unique

American religious institution. At present this historical writing seems to fall into two categories; the first is sponsored by the office of the church historian, the second by career writers and family biographers. One notes from the very outset the regional character of their treatment, the appearance of larger than life perspectives, aspects of misrepresentation, the abundance of traditional interpretations, and a lack of balanced use of literary and historical evidence. Unlike the carefully planned studies of national political leaders, Mormon biographies seem to grow out of the minds of individuals who have preconceived portraits of their final products.

John Taylor was certainly an outstanding figure of his time; his role assured in Mormon history by his leadership as the third president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Utilizing his talents as a highly gifted writer, Samuel Taylor unfolds a very interesting story of his paternal grandfather who was born and bred in an era that hailed its greatest virtue to be the perfectability of man. Though the main burden of the Mormon struggle with the outside world fell heavily on the shoulders of Joseph Smith, Jr., and, later, Brigham Young, John Taylor did more than stand in the shadows offstage to await his turn to enact human drama and pathos. An important early convert to Mormonism, John Taylor helped develop the English mission, served admirably as the Saints' spokesman in the East during decades of crisis, and helped articulate in print the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the collective Mormon mind. Yet, though the volume covers a wide area of problems faced by John Taylor, the main focus rests with the nagging problem of polygamy. Focusing on this central theme—*The Kingdom or Nothing*—Samuel Taylor devotes considerable time to the anti-polygamy crusade that spent its full force during the closing decade of the church

president's life. Although the author attempts to put the polygamy issue in proper perspective, and at the same time make his best effort to pay homage to his grandfather, he adds little to the overworked subject. It is not possible to ascertain why Samuel Taylor abandons many canons of historical method, since his brother spent considerable effort gathering primary source material from the LDS Historical Department. More fundamentally, however, he seems to have fallen victim to source material from which it is very difficult to obtain the kind of hard historical evidence that he sought. What emerges belongs more in the realm of hagiography than critical biography.

There are several aspects of this volume with which one might take issue. The long-standing feud between the Young and Taylor families is painted in nonobjective colors. Lacking data that would provide revealing insights to the conflict—a rift that is grossly exaggerated—the writer allows his vitriolic pen to besmirch Brigham Young at will, as if to revenge some grave injustice. The abundance of such treatment, not all of it trivial, makes it plain that the author lacks a proper familiarity with the currents that moved the tide of Mormon history. Gentiles fare no better.

A serious substantive weakness in *The Kingdom or Nothing* is its lack of analysis of the complex problems that separated the Mormons from the outside world; indeed, Taylor absorbs the traditional provincial view that assumes Gentile complicity in all matters of disagreement with the Saints. Surely it is time to come to terms with historical facts and give some level-headed understanding to these unsettled questions. Regardless of the author's intentions, his treatment heightens the impression that intricate issues can be answered in simplistic terms.

However, no criticism of Samuel Taylor's work can deny his utter lack of

pomposity, his sly sense of humor, his quality writing style, and his unobtrusive pride in John Taylor's achievements. Viewed in its entirety, *The Kingdom or Nothing* will stand as the best

work available on the complex and often contradictory church president.

DONALD R. MOORMAN
Weber State College

The City Bountiful: Utah's Second Settlement from Pioneers to Present. By LESLIE T. FOY. (Bountiful, Ut.: Horizon Publishers, 1975. Xviii + 350 pp. \$9.95.)

Utah's second Mormon settlement, now the state's fifth-largest city, is the subject of Les Foy's Bicentennial history. The story of Bountiful's early years, its development as an agricultural area known for its fine orchards and truck gardens, and its rapid post-World War II growth as a suburban residential wing of metropolitan Salt Lake City are all part of this logically organized community history. The author draws upon long experience as a teacher of Utah history to broaden the focus beyond south Davis County and presents a memorial which he defines as a "chronicle . . . written to preserve memories" (p. 1).

In each of three parts, with dividing lines at 1860 and 1940, the book ranges widely. Included are glances at government, education, religious organizations, the economy, social life, and major events of importance in state and local history. Useful maps and charts, an especially thorough index, and a large collection of photographs (some unfortunately without captions) add to the book's utility. Thumbnail sketches of current civic clubs and churches will be of value to residents, and a biographical section to a selected audience of descendants. The book, though not written for scholars, offers endnotes identifying principal sources, a commendable feature often neglected in town histories.

The City Bountiful is built upon a diverse research base. Especially laudatory are the author's excursions into government records—minutes of the early city council and county court. Foy

has conducted interviews, has examined available diaries, and has collected numerous family histories. Indeed, the author's extensive kinship ties have clearly influenced both the collection and presentation of information.

The book draws for episodes in recent history almost exclusively from single interviews about each subject, ignoring the risk of telling the story from one point of view. The entire sweep of recent municipal activity, for example, is recounted solely from the recollections of former mayors. The narrative lies uncomfortably close to the sources in another way with its disposition toward undigested research. Too often we seem to be reading the author's sketchy notes or close paraphrases of the documents and are given lengthy quotations that could have been better stated in the author's own direct prose. All of this results in an unevenness needing the attention of a judicious editor.

Highlights of the book include the informative, though episodic, vignettes of the settlement process, of certain businesses, market gardening, and water resources. Less satisfying are sketchy introductions to cooperatives, the United Order movement, the *Davis County Clipper*, J. C. Penney's "Golden Rule" store (we learn in an aside that Bountiful claims the second outlet in Penney's successful chain), local artists, theatres, and other topics. If some tidbits call for fuller treatment, other items might well have been screened out through a careful evaluation of what is important to Bountiful's history. Sometimes the pre-settlement story drifts too far afield. And

readers will find the examination of city government overburdened by trivia lifted uncritically from council minutes.

Appropriately, Foy does not shy away from expressing judgments, nor does he hesitate to report the disagreements over critical questions of land distribution, water supplies, or local ownership of the power company. But we are handed curious interpretations of such things as the Deseret alphabet (explained as a code to protect Mormon writings from outside eyes), and of political conditions in the 1870s (chap. 16).

This history leaves many hopes unfulfilled; nevertheless, the foundation established by *The City Bountiful* will make easier the task of future historians of the subject. The book achieves its goal of preserving memories of the past and captures a good deal of the local flavor of one of Utah's fastest-growing communities.

GLEN M. LEONARD

*Historical Department
Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints*

Cache Valley: Essays on Her Past and People. Edited by DOUGLAS D. ALDER. (Logan: Logan City Bicentennial Committee, 1976. Iii + 89 pp. Paper, \$2.50.)

Cache Valley: Essays on Her Past and People, as the editor Douglas D. Alder suggests, is not "intended as a definitive work" nor "as a replacement for Joel Ricks's collection of Centennial essays, *History of a Valley*, but rather as "a modest contribution toward a rich local history." Stimulated by an address that Leonard J. Arrington, LDS church historian, delivered before the George Washington Bicentennial Ball in Logan on February 20, 1976, an effort was begun, almost immediately thereafter, to collect articles nearing completion or already completed on the early history of Cache Valley. The volume that resulted, besides Arrington's address, includes five other essays, written by different authors, each a current or former resident of Cache Valley. The compilation was published by the Logan City Bicentennial Committee in cooperation with Utah State University as a Bicentennial project.

Dr. Arrington's address "Cache Valley's Bicentennial Heritage" reviews the lives of six immigrants who, in his opinion, "represent as well as any the ideals for which patriotic Americans have stood": freedom of opportunity, womanly resourcefulness and independence, cooperation to achieve community goals,

learning and citizen enlightenment, keeping a sense of balance and perspective and the ideal of America as a place of refuge. These ideals to him were characteristic of George Washington and the American Revolutionists and were intrinsic in the early settlers of Cache Valley. According to the editor, Arrington's "article sets the tone of the volume, suggesting that the early history of Cache Valley is an example of the continuing American ideal."

The Mormon hierarchy in Cache Valley is next discussed by Timothy L. Taggart in his essay "The Kingdom of God in Early Cache Valley." Early LDS church leaders Peter Maughan, William B. Preston, and Ezra T. Benson are examined. Taggart's article presents an interesting discussion on the lack of separation between church and state in Cache Valley during the last half of the nineteenth century. As Taggart shows, the same leaders were responsible for both temporal and spiritual affairs. Taggart exhibits extensive research and understanding of the early Mormon hierarchical system of government.

Using the Northwestern Shoshoni Indians in Cache Valley as a theme, Dr. Brigham D. Madsen illustrates vividly the relationship between the valley's

original inhabitants and the aggressive Mormon pioneers who settled among them. There were in 1868 approximately eighteen hundred Shoshoni Indians still living in northern Utah and Cache Valley; as a result, coexistence was not always amicable. Madsen's documentation, much of which is the result of primary research among documents in the National Archives, illuminates a number of striking differences that existed between the Indian policy of the Mormon settlers and that of the federal government.

Paul R. Willie's discussion of the "History of Dairying in Cache Valley" provides an excellent overview of the early dairy industry in Cache Valley. Willie traces the development of the Cache dairy farmer from his days as owner of a few cows, to his membership in a co-operative, and finally concludes with his becoming a supplier for large commercial dairies. Adding spice to his story, Willie tells us of the large dairy built in Paradise by Samuel McMurdie, a reported participant in the Mountain Meadow Massacre. Willie's well-researched history is both absorbing and informative.

A very interesting but little written on subject, early medicine in Cache Valley, is treated by Richard Daines in "Heroes and Horse Doctors: Medicine in Cache Valley, 1857-1900." This is not only a story of doctors, long forgotten, but an objective view of the generally unfavorable attitudes of the early Mormon leaders toward the medical establishment because of the less

than professional techniques they practiced. Even Oliver Cromwell Ormsby, the first professionally trained doctor to practice in Logan and its surrounding communities, a man portrayed as the "father of medicine in Cache Valley," is shown through painstaking research to have had many frailties.

"A Legend Named Black Jack" by A. J. Simmonds is a fascinating essay on one of Cache Valley's most colorful outlaws, John Williamson Nelson. The third son of the first presiding elder of Logan, Nelson, for over thirty years, according to this account, roamed throughout northern Utah, Idaho, and Montana stealing whatever might be profitable. "Black Jack," as he was known from an early age, has been the source of many legends, all of which come together in Simmonds's well written and entertaining account. The epilogue of this tale—in essence a testimonial that Black Jack still occasionally descends the stairs of the author's home—provides a personal touch most often omitted.

Individually the six essays are generally well written, interesting, and thoroughly researched. Lacking is an insight into who the authors are or their qualifications. Certainly these studies whet one's appetite to learn more about the history of Cache Valley and make one wonder how many more manuscripts, too narrow for a state historical publication, are in existence and could be published in this type of compilation.

LINDA THATCHER

Utah State Historical Society

BOOK NOTICES



The History of Murray City, Utah. By MURRAY BICENTENNIAL HISTORY BOOK COMMITTEE. (Murray: Murray City Corporation, 1976. 488 pp. \$10.00.)

A part of the greater Salt Lake City area, Murray and similar incorporated cities and towns usually find their history linked with that of the metropolis unless someone takes time to compile their separate stories. Murray City Corporation seems determined to preserve Murray's separate status as one of the state's largest (1976 population 27,121) cities by publishing a handsome book that is both readable and informative.

Named after Territorial Gov. Eli H. Murray (1880-86), the town possesses a distinct history that is well worth preserving. The struggle to incorporate Murray (pp. 19-26) is just one example of how the history of Murray diverges from that of Salt Lake City. Genuine differences of opinion on whether to incorporate the area led to a six-year debate over the issue with the local newspaper, *The American Eagle*, labeling the pro forces Progress and the con side Mossback.

The biographies of Murray mayors together with election data and the principal events of each administration; the rosters of officials; the stories of local businesses, schools, and other organizations; and the excellent historic photographs make this volume a valuable reference.

Aboriginal American Indian Basketry: Studies in a Textile Art without Machinery. By OTIS TUFTON MASON.

(Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1976. Xi + 624 pp. Paper, \$8.95.)

This reprint of a portion of the annual report of the U. S. National Museum for 1904 makes available Mason's comprehensive study of American Indian basketry, a classic of its genre. The text is illustrated with 212 figures, and 248 separate plates are appended.

The Adams One-Fifty: A Check-list of the 150 Most Important Books on Western Outlaws and Lawmen. Compiled by RAMON F. ADAMS. (Austin, Tex.: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1976. 91 pp. \$17.50.)

An excellent annotated bibliography for book collectors and buffs.

Amy: The World of Amy Lowell and the Imagist Movement. By JEAN GOULD. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975. Xii + 372 pp. \$12.50.)

Contains much detail on the poet's companion and friend Ada Dwyer Russell, the well known Utah actress.

The Big Cache: Fantasy, Fact, Folklore. By VERA CHRISTENSEN and ELIZABETH NUHN. (Logan, Ut.: Herald Printing Company, 1976. 84 pp. Paper, \$5.95.)

Written primarily for elementary students, *The Big Cache* is a combination of fantasy, fact, and folklore about Cache County. Curious about the early

history of Cache Valley, Jeff, Mike, and Rick climb into Grandad's Synchronized Time Machine and travel back in time to view Cache Valley's early history.

A second section contains "True Stories from Cache Valley People." This book adds some new material to the published sources on Cache Valley, of which there are few.

Joseph Smith for President. By JOHN HEINERMAN. (Manti, Ut.: Mountain Valley Publishers, 1976. ix + 148 pp. Paper, \$3.95.)

Following a sixteen-page introduction, the author uses the rest of the book to list alphabetically the candidate's views—illustrated with quotations—on subjects ranging from abortion (against) to world government (for).

Kaysville—Our Town. By CAROL IVINS COLLETT. (Kaysville, Ut.: Kaysville City, 1976. iv + 258 pp. \$7.00.)

The Bicentennial year has seen the publication of many local histories, including *Kaysville—Our Town*, an attractive compilation for the reference shelf. It is divided into numerous topical sections: midwives, barbering, mills, cooperatives, dentists, etc. This capsule treatment, when applied to subjects like the Morrisites and the Manifesto, leads to very simplistic conclusions.

An index, lists of town officials and settlers, a guide to historic sites, and a map make the book useful to general readers and researchers.

Life in a Narrow Place: The Havasupai of the Grand Canyon. By STEPHEN HIRST. Photographs by Terry Eiler and Lyntha Scott Eiler. (New York: David McKay Company, 1976. xiv + 302 pp. \$11.95.)

A historical study of the Havasupai and their struggle to regain ancestral lands that met with success in 1975 when President Ford signed a bill re-

storing plateau lands to the tribe—to date the largest return of land to a single tribe.

Memories of Moon Lake, Boneta, Mountain Home, and Talmage Wards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By MOON LAKE WARD BOOK COMMITTEE. ([Mountain Home, Ut.]: Moon Lake Ward, 1976. viii + 529 pp. \$12.00.)

Printed on enamel paper in an 8½-by-11 format, *Memories of Moon Lake* with its hundreds of photographs of individuals, families, and buildings looks like an elaborate version of a high school yearbook. Although the text is more detailed and informative than a yearbook, the idea behind this book is similar: to include as many people as possible.

Residents or former residents of central Duchesne County will enjoy reading the biographical sketches of relatives and friends and remembering shared experiences.

Men against McCarthy. By RICHARD M. FRIED. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976. xix + 428 pp. \$14.95.)

A new study of McCarthy's rise to power as his political foes saw it and his censure following hearings by the Senate Select Committee on Censure headed by Sen. Arthur V. Watkins of Utah.

The New Downtowns: Rebuilding Business Districts. By LOUIS G. REDSTONE. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1976. xxi + 330 pp. \$22.95.)

Two of the case studies included are the ZCMI Center and the Sheraton Salt Lake Complex. Mention is also made of the restoration of Trolley Square and the renovation of the ZCMI cast-iron façade. Section five of the book will be of special interest to those work-

ing for the preservation of historic buildings in the central business districts of Utah's cities.

The Religious Heritage of Southern California: A Bicentennial Survey. Edited by FRANCIS J. WEBER. (Los Angeles: Interreligious Council of Southern California, 1976. Vii + 119 pp. Paper, \$3.00.)

One of the book's six chapters is devoted to the LDS church and the role of Mormons in the development of southern California. The author, Paul Bailey, devotes several pages to the often-neglected Jefferson Hunt, Mormon Battalion leader, trailblazer, and member of the 1853 California legislature.

Ricks College: A Struggle for Survival. By JERRY C. ROUNDY. (Rexburg, Id.: Author [531 Linden Ave., Rexburg, Id. 83440], 1976. Xiv + 312 pp. \$12.95.)

Founded in 1888 as the Bannock Stake Academy for elementary school students, Ricks College has survived years of financial difficulty and attempts to give the school to the state of Idaho, or relocate it in Idaho Falls, to become a sound, growing, Mormon junior college. Mr. Roundy has made extensive use of primary sources in telling the history of the school.

Spanish Colonial Tucson: A Demographic History. By HENRY F. DO-

BYNS. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976. X + 246 pp. Cloth, \$11.50; paper, \$5.95.)

Spanish-surnamed individuals and Native Americans comprise present-day Tucson's largest ethnic minorities, a pattern atypical of United States cities. The author's historical chronicle—replete with previously unpublished primary source materials—traces the development of Tucson from the seventeenth century and shows how Spaniards, Mestizos from New Spain, and Native Americans from many tribes laid the ethnic foundations of the modern city.

This Reckless Breed of Men: The Trappers and Fur Traders of the Southwest. By ROBERT GLASS CLELAND. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976. Xvi + 361 + xx pp. Paper, \$4.95.)

Originally published by Knopf in 1950, this perennial favorite is now available in paperback edition.

Union Pacific Country. By ROBERT G. ATHEARN. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976. 480 pp. Paper, \$5.95; cloth, \$17.50.)

This standard work, originally published in 1971 by Rand McNally, has been reprinted.

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